AN OUTLINE
OF
JEWISH HISTORY

BY

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THE MIDDLE AGES AND MODERN TIMES

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PART I—THE MIDDLE AGES

THE MIDDLE AGES

§ 1.

Introduction.

THE thousand years which elapsed between the downfall of the Roman Empire in 476 and the discovery of America in 1492, is called by historians The Middle Ages. This period falls into two parts, during the first of which (the VIth to the IXth century) the great mass of the Jewish people lived in the Orient, in Babylonia, Persia, Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Palestine, only small and isolated Hebrew communities inhabiting such Western countries as Italy, Byzantium, Spain, France, Germany and Russia. From the XIth to the XVth century, however, (the second part of the Middle Ages), the situation was reversed, only a few Hebrews remaining in the East while all the rest moved westward. Instead of Palestine and Babylonia, Germany and other European countries became centres of Jewry.

A considerable portion of the world's international commerce was in the hands of the Jews,

who, ever since olden times, had been the middlemen between Asiatic and European merchants; thus it was comparatively easy for them to leave the Orient for more westerly homes. Their migrations increased as their chief centers of culture fell into a more and more hopeless state of decay with the settling of Asia into its age-long sleep after being inundated by Mongolian tribes.

In Europe the immigrants found Jewish settlements which had been founded in the days of the Roman Empire. Passing from Asia and Africa into Europe, Spain was the first bridge they had to cross. When that country fell into the hands of the Arabs in the VIIIth century, Eastern Jews penetrated with the conquerors into their new possession which became for several centuries one of the most enlightened countries of Europe under their transforming hands.

The European Jews lived very differently in the first period than in the second. During the former, when their numbers were small upon the western continent, they enjoyed comparative peace, and were very seldom molested by the surrounding nations which were at that time passing through the transition stages from paganism to Christianity. But in the second period, they were persecuted and oppressed by the Christians in proportion as they increased in numbers, and the upshot of all their sufferings

was that they were finally expelled altogether from many Christian countries.

The dividing line between the two parts of the Middle Ages was the period of the Crusades, which began in France and Germany in the year 1096 A. D.

CHAPTER I

Jewish Settlements in Europe Before the Crusades—500-1096 A. D.

§ 2.

Italy and Byzantium.

THE Roman emperors whose conquests deprived the Jews of their homeland, Judea, had nevertheless protected them always so long as they remained on Roman soil. The division of the Empire into its Western (or Roman) and Eastern (or Byzantine) parts, did not affect the Jews who continued to live as before among Italians in the one part and Greeks in the other.

Four hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jews witnessed the sack of Rome by the Barbarians, tribes of Goths and Teutons whose invasions brought about the complete downfall of this once invincible power (476). They witnessed also the gradual changes by which imperial Rome became Papal Rome, observing the circumstances that produced the transformation of a military

into an ecclesiastical capital, the seat of the Catholic Popes who were the High Priests of the Christian church in Europe.

The first Roman Popes did not oppress the Jews, though they tried very hard to convert them to Christianity. Gregory the Great (590) granted the Jewish communities the right to govern themselves according to their own laws and customs, but he offered them all kinds of rewards and privileges to embrace his religion. Whenever friends assured him that men who would be willing to abandon their own faith for the sake of personal gain could never be sincere in another, the Pope would answer: "But the children and the grandchildren of such converts will be sincere Christians."

When Italy became part of the Western Empire ruled by Charlemagne, the prosperity of the Jews increased greatly, for the Emperor had the wisdom to value the activities of the Jews in the field of international commerce at their true worth, and he gave them his special protection. Under Charlemagne's successors, however, the empire disintegrated and Western Europe came under the new system of feudalism whereby the great landowners or feudal barons ruled as despots over their tenants, acquitting their whole responsibility towards the crown by the payment of tributes and furnishing of troops in time of war. The situation of the

Jews now depended no longer upon one, but upon many rulers, so that in one place they would enjoy almost complete freedom, sharing in all but a few civil rights, while in another they would suffer cruel oppression.

At that time Rome, Venice, Naples and the island of Sicily were the homes of large Jewish communities. The Popes treated the Roman Jews with tolerance, some even taking them under their own protection and preventing any restriction of their rights on the part of the church councils. The only prohibition laid upon the Jews within the Papal dominions referred to the employment of Christian servants in their homes, for fear that they might be converted to Judaism. The conversion of Jews to Christianity, on the other hand, was encouraged in many ways, and eventually a descendant of one such converted family even became Pope under the name of Anacletus II (1130-38).

Popular legend has accounted in various ways for this event which is a proven historical fact. A learned Rabbi, Simon of Mayence, says the legend, had a little son named Elchanan, who was kidnapped. The boy was baptized and brought up in a Catholic monastery. When he grew to be a young man, he was taken to Rome and it was not long before his extraordinary talents brought him to the rank of cardinal, and the Pope dying soon afterwards, he was elected to

the papacy. But Elchanan longed for his own family and for the religion of his own people. So ardent was his desire to see his father once again that he resorted to the following ruse to achieve a meeting with him: He ordered the Bishop of Mayence to impose such hardships upon the Jews in his diocese that they would send delegates to Rome to complain before the Pope, and he had every hope that the venerable Rabbi Simon would be one of the envoys. It fell out as Elchanan had planned; Simon came with others to lay before the Pope the protests of the Jews of Mayence against the Bishop's edicts. At first Elchanan engaged the Rabbi in a religious dispute in which he displayed a knowledge of Judaism that amazed the Jewish scholar, and afterwards, being a great lover of chess, the Pope challenged his father to a game. As they sat alone together over the board, Elchanan revealed his secret. When Rabbi Simon recovered from his first shock of surprise, he recognized his lost son in the Roman Pope who soon convinced him of his desire to return to the fold of Israel. Rabbi Simon hastened back to Mayence, taking with him the Pope's order that the Bishop's persecutions cease at once, and full of joyful news for his wife about the finding of their long-lost child. Shortly afterwards, the Pope disappeared suddenly from Rome. He made his way secretly

to Mayence, where he lived in the home of his parents professing the Jewish religion.

Another version of the legend brings his history to no such happy conclusion, but tells how the Pope, overcome with remorse at his life-long apostasy, atoned for it with his death as he leaped from the topmost spire of St. Peter's and was dashed to pieces on the street below.

In the Byzantine empire on the Balkan peninsula, the Jews were far worse off than in Italy, for the emperors had treated them with deep enmity ever since the days of Justinian (VIth century). They had few civil rights, and were sometimes even converted to Christianity by force. The emperor Leo the Isaurian published an edict commanding all the Jews of Byzantium to embrace Christianity according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox church on pain of terrible punishment (723). Many made a pretense of accepting this ultimatum in the hope that the persecutions would cease after a while and leave them free to go back to their own faith, but many others preferred to go away from Byzantium. They went north to the coast of the Black Sea, to Taurida and the Crimea. It has also been said of the emperor Basil the Macedonian that he used every means in his power to compel the Jews to renounce their religion for Christianity, and when he realized that all his efforts were in vain he destroyed

about one thousand Jewish communities in his empire. Only five were left standing, and these owed their escape to the intercession of the Hebrew poet Shepahtiah, who had happened to cure the emperor's daughter of insanity. Legend attributes to this poet a prayer of repentance written in verse, beginning with the words "Israel Nashah." It is to be found in the Selichot and the Machzor. The following extract depicts the mood of the persecuted people:

"Lord, we knock at Thy door like beggars. Hear our prayers, Thou who dwellest on high! We are beset with oppression and insult on every side. Forsake us not, O God of our fathers! Send us salvation that the eyes of all may see. Let the evildoer cease to hold us in his power, and let our great sorrows have an end—let saviors come to Zion!"

Persecutions as terrible as those instigated by Basil were, however, comparatively rare. In ordinary times, the Byzantine Jews, in spite of their disabilities, played a very important part in the economic life of the country. They lived in many Grecian cities, notably in Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly and on the islands of the Archipelago. Communities of considerable extent were to be found in Constantinople, the capital, and in Salonika, the commercial city on the seacoast. The Jews engaged in a great variety of trades, especially in the production

and manufacture of silk. Most popular of all was the dying industry and "Jewish dye" was famous throughout the world of commerce. In the large cities, Karaite and Talmudic or "Rabbinite" Jews established their communities side by side. The Jews of Constantinople lived in Pera, the business quarter on the sea-board. Their civil rights, in conformity with the old church laws, were greatly curtailed, but they enjoyed considerable freedom in all matters pertaining to the affairs of their commnuities which were ruled over by elected elders or "ephors."

§ 3.

Spain Under the Visigoths.

Jews had lived in Spain on the Pyrenean peninsula since time immemorial, even before the people of that country had been converted to Christianity, having settled there as subjects of the Roman empire when Spain became part of those far-flung dominions.

In the Vth century when the Empire was nearing its fall a Teutonic tribe called Visigoths conquered Spain and established their kingdom in place of the Romans' which they destroyed. The Visigothic kings, having adopted Christianity, granted vast power to the clergy who at once engaged in vigorous persecution of the Hebrews. King Recaredo I (589), enacted exceedingly harsh laws against them, the aim of

which was to sever the amicable relations that had hitherto existed between the Jews and their Christian neighbors, for the Catholic clergy feared that the Jews might lure Christians away from the church. The Visgoth King Sisebuto gave all his Hebrew subjects the alternative of becoming Christians or leaving his dominions (612). A great number chose to leave, but many others submitted to the compulsion of outwardly adopting the alien faith, though at heart they remained loyal to Israel. A few subsequent rulers either modified the cruel anti-Jewish laws or abolished them altogether, but such tolerance was rare. Most of the Visigoths, being crude and savage, were predisposed to resort to methods of unbridled fanaticism in their struggle to reduce the Jews to submission. Goaded on by their clergy they determined to annihilate the Hebrew communities in their kingdom since there was no converting them.

None of these kings surpassed Receswind (652), Erwig (680) and Egica (687) in cruelty. These barbarians reserved their utmost brutality for those Jews who, after having been forcibly converted, returned to their own religion later on. During Egica's reign these converted Jews became so desperate that they conspired to overthrow the Visigothic dynasty. They entered into an alliance with their fellow-Hebrews in Northern Africa who were living

very happily under their Arab rulers, and planned, with their assistance, to destroy the intolerable regime in Spain. The plot was discovered and all the Spanish Jews suffered cruel punishment. The enraged king convened a special meeting of the church council and with the sanction of the assembled clergy, published the following edict (694):

"In view of the fact that the Jews not only profaned the religion into whose fold the Church had admitted them after baptism, by continuing to observe the laws of their former faith, but further dared to conspire to seize the supreme power in our kingdom, henceforth they shall all be regarded as slaves and given into serfdom to various Christian masters who are deprived of the right to set them free. Children above the age of seven years shall be taken from their parents and given to Christians to be brought up by them."

It is impossible to predict what the consequences of such persecution as this might have been had the Visigoth domination of Spain survived this edict long. But warlike Arab tribes, the Moors and Berbers, living in northern Africa which only the straits of Gibraltar divide from Spain, overran the country and soon conquered the greater part of it (711). The Jews welcomed the Arabs as their saviors and helped them everywhere against the Visigoths.

The Arab chieftains, after capturing a city, would then leave it in the charge of their faithful allies while they pushed on farther. Toledo, the Spanish capital, was surrendered by Jews to the Arab leader Tarik; it was they who opened the city gates to the conquerors while the Catholic population sought refuge in their churches. And Tarik appointed Jews to maintain order in the fallen city. Thus they became the masters of the very places from which they had once been so heartlessly expelled. Their rule once established in Spain, the Arab caliphs granted completed religious freedom and communal self-government to the Jews.

In Granada, Cordova, Toledo and many other cities, numerous Jewish communities again sprang into being, and everywhere the Hebrews enjoyed the same independence as their brethren in Arab Babylonia.

The Arab army that conquered Spain belonged to the Eastern Caliphate which belonged at that time to the Damascus dynasty of Omayyards, so that Spain was in the beginning a province of the Caliphate of Damascus. When the Omayyads were superseded by the Abbasid dynasty of the Baghdad caliphate, Abdurrachman, the last of the Omayyads, fled to Spain and declared himself an independent ruler (755). He chose the city of Cordova for his capital and the Arab kingdom in Spain thus

came to be known as the Caliphate of Cordova.

With the reign of Abdurrachman an era of peaceful development opened for the Jews. Strictly loyal to their religion and national traditions, they nevertheless mingled freely with the enlightened Arabs in political as well as in intellectual activities. Working together, these two Semitic races brought Spain to such a high degree of culture that it long remained the brightest spot in the darkness of mediaeval Europe.

§ 4.

France and Germany.

Jewish settlements in Gaul (France), came into existence at the time when that country was still a province of the ancient Roman empire. In the IVth and Vth centuries of the Christian era, such communities were founded in Marseilles, Orleans, Clermont, Paris, Cologne and other cities. The Jews enjoyed the rights of Roman citizens everywhere, and lived peaceably side by side with the native heathens. The influence of Christianity which began to gain an ever-increasing hold upon the warlike and barbarian Gauls, ought to have had a civilizing effect upon their crude and primitive minds; springing from the parent Hebrew faith it ought to have made a point of contact between the Franks and Teutons and the Jews who lived in

their midst. And at first the newly converted tribes, seeing very little different between the two religions, actually did mingle with the Jews and even intermarry with them. But this did not please the high Christian clergy who feared the Jewish influence upon the "sons of the Church" and at once set about destroying their friendship. They began to show their congregations how sinful it was to continue on terms of amity with a people whose ancestors had killed Christ, and many Catholic bishops used all their power to make the kings either convert the Jews by force or expel them from their kingdoms.

Their efforts were very successful in the new Frankish kingdom under Christian rulers of the Merovingian dynasty. (VIth to VIIth centuries). These kings left the Jews completely to the mercy of the clergy and delivered them up to the laws of the church. The ecclesiastical councils of Orleans (533-541) strictly forbade intermarriage; the Jews were not allowed to appear on the streets during Passion Week and Easter Week; the severest punishment followed conversion of Christians to Judaism; a slave owned by a Jew might buy his freedom by becoming a Christian. The clergy were tireless in their efforts to break off all possible contact between the Jews and the other inhabitants of the country, so as to set them apart as an inferior caste, not entitled to even the simplest

rights that belong to the least of human beings. Not content with this, some of the Frankish kings and bishops tried to convert the Hebrews to Catholicism by violence.

Bishop Avitus of Clermont spent much time and energy to persuading the Jews in his diocese to renounce the religion of their fathers, but his sermons bore no fruit. Only one Jew was baptized during Easter Week, and his apostasy enraged the others. One day, as he was walking on the street, another Jew poured some evil-smelling oil on his head. This was on Ascension Day, and an angry crowd of Christians destroyed the synagogue to its very foundations by way of reprisal, while the Bishop looked on, and threatened all the Jews with death. The next day the bishop summoned an assembly of the Jews of Clermont and offered them the choice of embracing Christianity or leaving the city. One of the poets of that time, who was also a monk, transcribed the Bishop's brief speech into Latin verse, as follows:

"Look what thou dost, thou old and foolish Hebrew people. Begin thy life anew and learn true faith, even in thine old age. But time is too short for long discourses. Hear thou then: accept our religion or go hence. Thou has thy free choice; be advised by me and remain with us; let the obstinate ones go."

After three days of painful deliberation about

five hundred Jews consented to be baptized and the rest fled to Marseilles (576).

The Frankish king, Hilperic, and his associate, the learned bishop Gregory of Tours, displayed extraordinary zeal in converting Jews to Christianity. Hilperic had a financial agent in Paris, a Jew named Prisk, whose shrewdness and honesty the king appreciated to the full, but he could not reconcile himself to the fact that Prisk insisted upon remaining a Jew. Together with the Bishop of Tours he tried to convert Prisk, but the financier stubbornly refused. One day the king jestingly took hold of Prisk's head and bending it low, said to the Bishop, "Come, servant of the Lord, lay your hands upon him." Prisk recoiled in horror from the sign of the Cross, whereupon the king flew into a great rage. The Bishop entered into heated argument with the Jew as to which of their religions was the true one and the latter tried to prove by reasoning and quotations from the Bible that Christ was not the Son of God. King Hilperic then sent Prisk away to revise his beliefs, but finding that he was absolutely immovable, he lost patience and cried: "If the Jew will not believe of his own free will then he shall be made to do so." Fearing the threats of both the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities, many Paris Jews were consenting to be baptized, but under one pretext or another Prisk postponed his sur-

render, for he would not even pretend to renounce the faith of his fathers for any other. One Saturday as he was going to the synagogue which was on a by-street, he was attacked by a Jewish convert and killed (582).

Dagobert, one of the last of the Merovingian kings, treated the Jews with the same cruelty as his contemporaries, the Visigoths of Spain were doing, and mercilessly expelled all the Jewish immigrants who had sought refuge from Spain in his kingdom. In 629 he published an edict, approved by the bishops, by which all Jews who would not consent to be baptized were to leave the Frankish dominions immediately. The chroniclers say that Dagobert took this step as a result of a letter from Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor who had also begun to persecute the Jews in his empire. Heraclius, it seemed, had learned from the predictions of astrologers, that Byzantium would be devastated by a "circumcized people," and thinking that this must refer to the Jews, the emperor advised the Frankish king to have all his Jewish subjects baptized, for otherwise they were a menace to every Christian kingdom. Shortly afterwards a "circumcized people" did actually invade Byzantium; they were not Jews, however, but Arab Moslems.

The fall of the Merovingian kingdom and the founding of the empire of Charlemagne

brought freedom from persecution to the Jews of France and Germany for many years (768-814). This great king did not allow the clergy to overrule him as his predecessors had done and always protected the Jews who had by that time become the chief motive power in the industrial and commercial life of Europe. Charlemagne helped and protected their commercial enterprises in France, allowing them to acquire landed estates and to engage in all kinds of trades and other activities, of which navigation was among the most popular. Some educated Jews were the emperor's intimate friends, and one of these, a man of great learning named Isaac, was a member of the delegation sent by Charlemagne to the Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun-al-Raschid. Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious (810-840) also protected the Jews from the hostility of the Catholic clergy. When Agobard, the fanatical bishop of Lyons, began to incite the Christian congregations to attack the Jews, Louis ordered him to desist and promised to take the persecuted people under his special protection. He appointed an official with the title of "Jewish Elder" (Magister judaeorum) to guard their civil and commercial rights.

The empire of Charlemagne fell to pieces once more after the death of his son, and Italy, France and Germany became separate kingdoms

ruled over by the emperor's descendants, whose power was very limited however. Under the feudal system, certain counts and barons enjoyed unlimited and all but kingly powers within their own domains, and the status of the Jews varied consequently according to the fancy of these various feudal lords. In one province they were treated with tolerance, in another persecuted. Wherever the clergy's influence was powerful they were cruelly used, as in the city of Toulouse, where the following "ecclesiastical" custom was established: Once a year, before the Easter holidays, the elder of the local Jewish community had to appear before the count in his castle and submit to having his face smartly slapped, as a reminder of the sufferings of the crucified Christ. Later on the Jews paid a special tax to avoid this annual indignity.

In Béziers, the Catholic clergy preached sermons during the Passion Week, calling upon the Christians to avenge themselves upon the Jews for crucifying Christ, and the mobs, obeying their spiritual shepherds, attacked and beat the unfortunate Hebrews and stoned their homes. There were cases of armed resistance which led to bloody though futile encounters with the fanatical crowds.

When the dynasty of Charlemagne died out in Germany, the Saxon dynasty was inaugurated with Otto the Great (Xth century), who

annexed Italy to his possessions and received the title of Emperor. The German rulers regarded themselves as the successors of the Roman emperors and the Jews as crown property, which they had inherited from ancient Rome. The emperors often ceded whole districts to their vassals, counts, barons or bishops, together with the Jews who lived there. In every district the Jews had to pay very heavy taxes for permission to carry on trade or commerce of whatever description.

In many German cities the Jews lived in separate communities whose chiefs were learned rabbis or elders. The most prosperous of these were in Alsace-Lorraine and in the Rhine country, Mayence, Worms, Cologne and Speyer, in all of which towns Talmudic schools were established and religious teachers once more, as in the past, became the people's leaders. At the beginning of the XIth century, Rabbi Gershom, a certain scholar of Mayence, rose to great fame. He was surnamed Meyer Hahola (The light of the dispersed people), and was head of the highest Talmudic school where rabbis were trained for service in the communities of France and Germany. Like the gaons of olden times, Rabbi Gershom decided moot questions of law and made new laws when necessary. It was he who prohibited polygamy which still persisted here and there amongst the Jews of the East,

and he also ruled that no husband might divorce his wife without her consent. These laws were approved by the rabbis' convention at Worms. The scholars who were graduated from Gershoms's school were known as "the wise men of Lorraine."

§ 5.

Russia and Poland. The Khazar Kingdom.

The first settlements of Jews in the countries which later on became part of Southern Russia were of very ancient date. In the opening centuries of the Christian era they already existed in the Greek dominions north of the Black Sea and in the Crimean peninsula, having been founded by emigrants out of the neighboring empire of Byzantium, which had colonies in all those countries. Two Greek inscriptions on old monuments found near Kerch and dated 80-81 A. D., prove that there was in this province a "synagogue of the Jews," that is, a Jewish community and house of worship.

In the VIIth century a powerful kingdom arose on the shores of the Caspian Sea. This was the Kingdom of the Khazars, a race of Tartar origin. At first they were heathens, but later on became acquainted with the religions of Jews, Greeks and Arabs. The idea of monotheism attracted them greatly and the chronicles tell how Bulan, their king, expressed

a desire to become a convert to one of these faiths (about 730 A. D.). The Byzantine Emperor sent envoys with gifts, trying to induce him to embrace Christianity; the Arab caliph, through his ambassadors, tried to persuade him of the superiority of Islam. Jewish sages also were summoned to appear. Finding the representatives of each religion praised only his own, King Bulan decided on the Jewish as the most ancient, and following their king's example, many Khazars embraced Judaism. The Khazar kings were called Khagan (cohan, or priest). Their capital was Ityl, near the mouth of the Volga at the Caspian Sea, almost where the city of Astrakhan now stands.

Khagan Obadiah, one of Bulan's descendants, was a particularly zealous Jew. He invited Jewish scholars from abroad to settle in his kingdom and had his subjects taught the Bible. He founded synagogues and regulated the order of divine services. The Jewish population had a highly civilizing influence upon the manners and customs of the half-savage Khazars. For a very long time the Jews of other countries remained in ignorance of this kingdom; the Spanish Jews heard of it for the first time in the Xth century when about the year 950, the Khazar King Joseph, a descendant of Obadiah's, sent a letter to Spain describing the adoption of Judaism by his ancestors. Not long after this, however,

the Khazar kingdom was destroyed. In former centuries the Khazars had often invaded the Slavs living along the Volga and the Dnieper, and received tribute from them; but as the Russian kingdom gained power under the Kieff Grand Dukes, the prestige of the Khazars weakened. One of these Russians, Sviatoslav, seized many of the Khazar fortresses along the Volga and crowded the Khazars out of the Caspian country (969). Some of them migrated into the Crimea and some were dispersed over various Russian territories.

About that time Jews appeared in the Russian city of Kieff. The Russian chronicler Nestor says that in 986 "Khazar Jews" came to Kieff where the Grand Duke, St. Vladimir, was preparing to abandon his heathen state and become a Christian according to the rites of the Greek church. The Khazar Jews, so say the legends, tried to persuade him to become a Jew instead, and Vladimir asked them "Where is your country?" "In Jerusalem," the Jews replied. "Do you live there?" persisted the Duke. "No," they answered, "for God, to punish our ancestors, scattered them over many countries all over the world." Then Vladimir said: "How then can you teach others if God turned against you and dispersed your people?" So the Grand Duke was baptized and his subjects also. Later on Russian monks, educated by the Greeks,

came to Kieff and often engaged the Jews in theological discussion. One of them, Theodosius of Pechersk, often visited the Kieff Jews and held long disputes with them, calling them infidels and apostates (1070). Russia was beginning to assume the same attitude towards the Jews as Byzantium before her.

One hundred years after the reign of St. Vladimir, Jews still lived and carried on commerce in the duchy of Kieff. The Grand Duke Sviatopolk II protected Jewish merchants and even entrusted some of them with the duty of collecting taxes and other ducal revenues. The community was a very large one, but a great calamity befell it during the interregnum following the death of Sviatopolk (1113).

Vladimir Monomachus was invited by popular consent to occupy the throne of Kieff, but the new ruler kept delaying his departure for the duchy, and meanwhile riots broke out in the city. Mobs sacked the house of Putiata, one of the officials, and then attacked the Jews and plundered their homes. The inhabitants of Kieff again sent envoys to Monomachus, with instructions to warn him that if he hesitated much longer, the riots would soon be uncontrollable. At that, he left immediately and as soon as he arrived in Kieff order was restored.

The Jews lived on in Kieff. In the year 1124 they suffered great loss of life and property in

a conflagration that swept over a large portion of the city. A great many Jewish merchants were attracted to Kieff as one of the principal centers of exchange for European and Asiatic merchandise.

Jewish emigrants from Byzantium and neighboring countries of Asia usually settled in Russia in this duchy while those from Western Europe chose the nearer country of Poland for their refuge. It is believed that Jewish merchants from Germany had had business connections with Poland since the time of Charlemagne and that this was the deciding factor in their settling there rather than in Russia. There is an old Polish legend concerning the Jews, which runs as follows:

After the death of their duke Poppel, the Poles came to the assembly in Krushewitz to elect a successor (about 842). There was a long argument as to who should be elected and it was finally decided that the first man to enter the city on the following morning should be their duke. It happened that this was a Jew named Abraham Porchovnik; he was declared duke, but declined the honor and advised the people to elect Piast instead, who was a Pole and a man of great wisdom. They did so and Piast became the progenitor of the dynasty to which he gave his name.

Another legend tells that towards the end of

the IXth century Jewish delegates from Germany came to the Polish duke Leshek with a petition to admit Jews to Poland, and that Leshek, after questioning them as to the nature of their religion, gave his consent, whereupon there was a great migration from Germany into his domains (894).

The influx of Jews into Poland vastly decreased towards the end of the Xth century when the Poles, by embracing Christianity, established connections with the Western or Catholic church and with the European countries where large communities of Jews were established.

CHAPTER 11

The Regeneration of Judaism in Moorish Spain—950-1215 A. D.

§ 6.

The Caliphate of Cordova.

BY the tenth century the kingdom founded in Spain by the Moors in 711 had reached a high degree of prosperity. It had spread over the whole center and south of the Pyrenean Peninsula where the great cities of Cordova, Seville, Toledo and Granada bespoke its power. In the north only, small Christian kingdoms still lingered in Aragon and Castille. The Jews lived among the friendly Arabs, enjoying the protection of their rulers, called Caliphs, whose capital was Cordova. The Caliphate of Cordova reached the zenith of its glory during the reign of Abdurrachman III and Alakem II (912-976 A. D.), of whom the former was one of the most illustrious rulers of his age, whether Christian or Mahometan. He was famous as a patron of science, poetry and the arts.

Commerce and industry flourished in the

Spain of the Arabs. Of the country's many rich and populous cities, Cordova had about half a million inhabitants, Mahometans, Jews and Christians, more than a hundred thousand houses and many mosques and palaces. To the peace-loving and enlightened Cordovans, intellectual prowess was more honorable than military, and in the highest circles the poet and the man of science commanded more respect than even the most famous warrior. The Caliph Alakem was himself a poet and lover of science; he spent vast sums on rare and valuable books and his library contained a collection of over four hundred thousand manuscripts. The University of Cordova was the most famous in Europe. Scientists and writers, both Jewish and Moor, were very often appointed to the highest offices in the kingdom. One of the most influential statesmen of that time was a Jew named Hasdai-ibn-Shaprut (915-970 A. D.) The son of a well-known citizen of Cordova, Hasdai received a good education; he studied philology and medicine and was equally at home in the Hebrew, Arabic and Latin languages. He possessed, besides, a very practical mind and exceptional administrative ability.

The attention of Abdurrachman having been drawn to Hasdai's rare talents, the Caliph made him his councillor or minister of foreign affairs,

in which capacity all negotiations between the Caliph of Cordova and foreign rulers or envoys were conducted by him. Occupying a position thus eminent at court, Hasdai was tireless in helping his fellow-Jews. He became the chief of the Hebrew communities in Spain, an office which corresponded somewhat to that of the exilarchs in ancient Babylon. Under his protection the Spanish Jews lived peacefully and grew rich, and whenever envoys from Byzantium or other countries of Europe or Asia came to Cordova, Hasdai would question them closely as to the condition of the Jews where they came from. One day the Persian ambassador told him that in a remote land there existed an independent Jewish kingdom called Khazaria, whose king was named Joseph. Hasdai at first refused to believe this joyous news. He determined to convince himself of the truth of the story and ascertain whether there was indeed a place on the earth's surface where some of the dispersed and homeless nation had actually founded a kingdom of their own. After a long search, Hasdai's scouts discovered the route to the unknown Khazaria, and he then sent, by way of Byzantium and Russia, an envoy bearing a letter to King Joseph, begging him to write him the whole truth concerning his mysterious kingdom. "For if I knew," wrote Hasdai, "that our people do really possess a king-

dom in this world which is wholly theirs, I would abandon my high position here, forsake my family, and cross mountains and valleys, sea and land, until I came to the place where my master, the Jewish king, lives. I would behold the peace in which this remnant of Israel dwells; then would I pour out my soul in praise to God, who has not denied His mercy to all of His unhappy people who have sought deliverance so ardently and so long in their wanderings from country to country. With our honor gone, shorn of our pride, and exiled, we have no answer to give to those who say to us: 'Every nation has a kingdom, but you have not even a trace of one on all the earth.'" Some time later, Hasdai received an answer from the Khazar king, or Khagan, Joseph. (About **960.**) **From** this missive he learnt that the Khazar kingdom was not of Jewish origin and that only the kings and a certain section of the population professed Judaism. At the end of his letter, King Joseph said: "Our eyes are turned towards the wise men of Israel in the academies of Jerusalem and Babylonia. May the Lord hasten the promised deliverance of Israel, may He bring His dispersed people together while we yet live!" Ten years after the date of King Joseph's letter, Spain received the sad news of the fall of the Khazar kingdom. It was not Hasdai's destiny to settle in the Jewish king-

dom; on the contrary, it was to Spain that the descendants of the Khagans were forced to flee for refuge against their conquerors.

Hasdai, himself a scholar, was a patron and protector of the representatives of Jewish learning. A Talmudic school for advanced scholars was founded in Cordova during his lifetime, of which the chroniclers give the following account:

One of the four Talmudic scholars sent from Babylonia to collect money for the academy in Sura, who were taken prisoners by Arab sailors (see Part II, §72), was set free by Cordovan Jews paying a ransom for him. (925 A. D.) The name of this Babylonian Talmudist was Moses-ben-Enoch, and he settled in Cordova without letting anybody know him for the great scholar he was. An accident brought the truth to light, however. One day he came to the synagogue of Cordova wearing the dress of a poor wanderer. The local rabbi and judge, Rabbi Nathan, was lecturing on the Talmud and trying to explain to his students some very intricate point of the law. Moses, sitting humbly near the door, saw that the rabbi's exposition was not very clear, but he contained his impatience as well as he could. After a while he found it impossible to remain silent any longer, and interpolated his own opinion upon the question at issue. The audience listened in great astonishment to the profound learning of

this poor wanderer, and a number of other difficult questions were to put him then, all of which he answered with a readiness that showed the vast extent of his knowledge. At length Rabbi Nathan, as he prepared to leave the synagogue for the day, said to his hearers: "It is not for me to be your rabbi; that title belongs to this stranger who comes here thus poorly attired. He is my master and hereby I declare myself his pupil. Let him be elected in my place, as rabbi and judge of the Jews of Cordova." When this was done, Moses set himself the task of spreading the knowledge of the Talmud among the Jews all over Spain. He founded a school of higher learning in Cordova and had precious manuscripts sent there from Babylonia. This school soon became so famous that a great many eager young students flocked to it from all parts of Spain and from the neighboring countries in the north of Africa. The spiritual rule of Rabbi Moses was universally recognized; everybody submitted without question to his rulings, just as in olden times the people accepted those of the Babylonian gaons. Moses did not bear the tile of gaon, but of rabbi (teacher), which came into general use thereafter among the Jews of Europe.

The Jewish philologists and grammarians also enjoyed the special protection of Hasdai. Menachem and Dunash, the celebrated grammarians,

were living in Cordova at that time, both engrossed in the study of the Hebrew language, but holding divergent opinions upon its grammatical rules. Menachem wrote the "Machbereth," the first dictionary of the ancient Hebrew tongue, and Dunash reviewed it, not without much sharp criticism of his rival's findings. This led to a heated controversy between the followers of the two scholars; Hasdai joined the ranks of Dunash's supporters and withdrew his protection from poor Menachem. A pupil of the latter master was Jehuda-ibn-Hayyuz, another famous grammarian who was the first to establish the rule that the stem of all Biblical words consisted ordinarily of three letters.

§ 7.

After the reigns of the Caliphs Abdurrachman and Alakem, the glory of Cordova began to decline. The Christians on the one side and the African Moors on the other, often raided the territories of the Caliphate, leaving ruin and havoc behind them. In 1013 Cordova itself was devastated by hordes of Arabs and shortly afterwards the Caliphate fell. Arab Spain then split up into several petty kingdoms named after their capitals, Granada, Seville, Saragossa. Many Jews fleeing from the chaos in Cordova settled in Granada, and soon after the arrival of these refugees, a remarkable man appeared

in their midst who did the same for his fellow-Jews in Granada as Hasdai had done in Cordova. This was Samuel Halevi, who later on received the title of Nagid (chief, elder).

A native of Cordova, Samuel received in his youth a liberal education, both religious and secular. He was equally familiar with Hebrew and Arabic, wrote with great literary distinction and was an admirable caligrapher, a talent very highly esteemed in those days.

After the fall of Cordova, Samuel settled in the city of Malaga, which belonged to the kingdom of Granada. There the proceeds of a small spice-shop afforded him a very meagre livelihood. His shop stood next door to the residence of Alarif, the vizier of Granada, and Samuel used to write letters for one of the maid-servants to her master in Granada. Alarif became interested in those letters written in so beautiful a hand and so elegantly expressed. Coming one day to Malaga, the vizier made a point of meeting Samuel and was greatly astonished to find the modest shopkeeper a man of wide learning and distinguished intellect. "Your place is not here," he said to Samuel, "but at my side; henceforth you shall be my adviser." The vizier took Samuel back to Granada, and made him his secretary. Several years later Alarif was taken ill and on his death-bed he indicated Samuel to Gabus, king

of Granada, as a man likely to be very useful in an administrative capacity. King Gabus, who set scholarship at the highest value, made Samuel his intimate and entrusted him with the supervision of important matters of state. (1027 A. D.) Samuel occupied the exalted office of vizier of Granada for twenty-eight years. His wise rule helped to increase the country's prosperity; he set the kingdom completely in order and was very often successful in keeping it out of military encounters which would have been risky and dangerous. This Jewish official had many enemies among the prominent Arabs who were angered that a Jew should occupy a position of such eminence at court. But Samuel disarmed even his bitterest foes by his good nature and gentleness. Conscientious in his duty as a statesman, he was also diligent in furthering the interests of his own people. King Gabus appointed him "nagid," that is, chief over all the Jews in his kingdom, and while he held this office, Samuel did much to raise their civil status.

His protection was extended not only to the Jews in Spain, but also to the communities in North Africa, Babylonia and the Holy Land. And in the midst of all the arduous work which his high position entailed he still found time to hold Talmudic lectures for the exposition of the law to those who sought and loved learning. He supported poor scholars and employed scribes

to copy the Talmud in manuscripts which he then gave to indigent students free of charge. Samuel wrote a book entitled "An Introduction to the Talmud" (Mebo-ha-Talmud) wherein he tries to explain the origin of the "verbal teachings" and to describe the methods by which the Talmudists interpreted the Bible. This "Introduction" is to be found in all the editions of the Babylonian Talmud. Besides this work Samuel wrote a book of religious songs in verse, in imitation of the Psalms (Ben-Tehilim), a book of Parables (Ben-Mishleh) after the Parables of Solomon, and a collection of philosophical meditations (Ben-Koheleth) like of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

He died in 1055 and was succeeded by his son Joseph as vizier of Granada and Jewish nagid. Joseph held these offices during the reign of King Badis, the son of Gabus, rendering great services to the kingdom. But influential Moors, envious of the great Jew, conspired to bring about his downfall. During a war in which Granada was engaged, his enemies circulated false rumors to the effect that it was he who had invited the enemy into the country with the object of setting another king upon the throne of Granada. The Arab populace credited these rumors and one day a frenzied mob rushed the vizier's palace. Joseph blackened his face with charcoal in an attempt to

save himself from recognition by the crowd and hid in one of the farthest chambers of the palace. But they found and killed him there, and his body was hanged near the gate of Granada (1066 A. D.). Then the mob attacked the other Hebrews, killing and robbing several hundred families. The rest saved themselves by flight and amongst the fugitives were the wife and son of the murdered vizier. This fearful outbreak had a powerful and far-reaching effect upon the fate of the Jews throughout Granada; after fifty years of peace and prosperity they had to leave the country and migrate to other Moorish possessions in Spain.

Wars between the Arabs of southern Spain and the Christians of the north, were becoming more and more frequent. At last Christian Castile and Arab Seville met in open warfare, the Sevillians summoning to their aid the warlike tribe of the Almoravides from Africa. A bloody battle took place near Solac in which the Moors were victorious (1086 A. D.). Jews fought bravely in the ranks of Mahometans and Christians alike, for there were at that time many Jews in Castile. Because of the religious requirements of the combatants, the day of battle had to be arranged so as not to fall on Friday, for that was the Sabbath of the Moslems, nor on Saturday, the Sabbath of the Jews, nor on Sunday, the Sabbath of the Christians.

The Almoravid conquerors established their dominion in southern Spain and retained supremacy there for the following half-century.

§ 8.

Solomon Gabirol. The Progress of Jewish Literature.

There were so many Jewish scholars and poets in Spain during the XIth and XIIth centuries that this period has justly received the title of the "Golden Age of Hebrew Literature." One of these who lived at the time of Samuel Nagid (1020-1058 A. D.) was the famous poet Solomon-ibn-Gabirol. Born in Malaga he lost both his parents when very young and in this forsaken state he was doomed to a life of wandering and poverty. Drifting from one city to another, he finally settled in Granada where Samuel took him under his protection. Gabirol's verse, as distinguished for its profound emotional quality as for the sonorous melody of its cadences, delighted his contemporaries no less than later generations. It is in his sacred poems which are read in synagogues to this day, that the inspired character of his genius is perhaps most striking. These poems voice the sorrows of the scattered nation and the longing of the faithful soul that seeks God with unremitting devotion. The following is a typical example of his popular hymns:

"In a foreign land the hapless captive is become a slave, a slave of Egypt (i. e., the alien). Since the day, O Lord, when Thou didst first forsake her, she has awaited Thy return. All things have an ending but to my troubles there is no end. Year follows year and my wounds heal not. Tortured and trodden underfoot, bent under a heavy yoke, robbed and stripped, how long, O God, shall we bewail our insults, our age-long bondage? Ishmael (Islam) is like the lion and Esau (Christianity) like the vulture; when the one is done with us the other comes to torture us yet more."

Gabirol's religion found its loftiest and most powerful expression in a long hymn called the "The King's Crown" (Kether-Malchus). This noble composition, which has been incorporated into the service on Yom-Kippur, contains a great deal of philosophy concerning the main dogmas of creed, the attributes of the Deity and the marvels of the created world, the wisdom of God's ways and the mysterious forces of the human soul.

Another of Gabirol's works dealing with these religious and philosophical subjects is "The Source of Life." He was a follower of the Greek Plato and of the Hebrew Philo of Alexandria. "The Source of Life," translated from Arabic into Latin, was widely used by the Christian theologians of the Middle Ages who

knew the author under the name of Avicebron. Gabirol died at the age of 38 years and the following popular legend arose about his death. An Arab who envied him his greatness as a thinker and a poet, secretly killed him and buried the body under a fig-tree in his garden. Immediately the tree began to bear fruit of such wonderful flavor and size that tales about it reached the ears of the king himself who summoned the Arab to appear before him and explain how he managed to grow such magnificent fruit. When Gabirol's murderer, taken unawares, began to grow confused in his explanation, the king gave orders to get the truth from him by means of torture. The Arab confessed his crime and the king had him hanged on the fig-tree that had betrayed him.

The succeeding generations of poets were all imitators of Gabirol and of these Moses-ibn-Ezra (1070-1138 A. D.) was one of the most gifted. He belonged to a family of Granada, and while still a youth fell in love with a daughter of his brother's and asked her hand in marriage. But the brother refused and in his grief Moses left his native city and went to Castile. Having renounced happiness, he sought forgetfulness in poetry and philosophy. He sang of the sorrows and disillusionments of life, of the treachery of friends, of the malice and falseness of all men. Now and then, however,

the poet seemed to take heart again and dream of a quiet life of peace in the bosom of nature, and then his verse would be in praise of beauty, and of the ecstasy of youth. The secular poems make up a volume of lyrics under the title of "Tarshish." Later on, Ibn-Ezra devoted himself almost entirely to religious themes as Gabirol had done before him. He wrote some two hundred "prayers of repentance" (selichoth), many of which are read in synagogues still. Besides his poems, which were all written in Hebrew, Ibn-Ezra wrote many books on rhetoric, philosophy and ethics, but these were only an imitation of Arab works of the same kind.

Among the thinkers of that time, one, Bahya-ibn-Pakuda, a rabbi of Saragossa, was especially well known. He wrote an excellent book on moral duties called "Duties of the Heart" (Hovoth-ha-Levavoth). He divides the entire law into two parts: "rites," or duties of the body, and moral precepts, or duties of the heart, and gives to the latter a far higher place than to the former. The object of this work was to awaken and develop in every Jew a deep moral consciousness. Translated from Arabic into Hebrew it became the favorite reading of all thinking people, and centuries later, translated into the Jewish vernacular, it was eagerly read by the common people.

Among the Talmudists of the golden age,

Isaac Alfasi was admitted the greatest master. (1103 A. D.) He was a native of Fez (which is called Fas in Arabic, whence Isaac's name), and settled in Spain at the time of the Almoravid conquests. He was a celebrated Talmudist even in his native city and his fame proceded him to Spain where students, wishing to improve their knowledge of the law, flocked to him from all over the country. The city of Lacena, where Alfasi occupied the position of rabbi, became the center of rabbinical learning, as Cordova had been before it. To facilitate the study of the Talmud, Alfasi wrote his famous work, "Galachoth," the Rudiments of the Law.

In the Baylonian Talmud, which consists of many books, the portion dealing with matters of the law (Galacha) is not separated from that dealing with matters of ethics (Hagada). Alfasi extracted the ethical data scattered all over this immense collection, shearing them of all superfluous commentary, and collected them into a "Little Talmud." This work made the study of the Talmud considerably easier and was the first step towards a systematic classification of the Hebrew law.

§ 9.

Jehuda Halevi.

Hebrew poetry in Spain found its highest expression in the work of Jehuda-Halevi (1086-

1142 A. D.) A native of Christian Castile, Jehuda left his home to live in Moorish Spain, and was educated there in the schools of the most eminent Talmudists and philosophers. He also studied medicine and returning in after years to Castile he made his living by the practice of medicine. But most of his time was devoted to poetry, philosophy and theology. As a poet, Jehuda Halevi greatly surpassed his predecessors, even the illustrious Gabirol. In the suave, melodious verse of his young days, he sang of nature, of love and of the charms of living. He very often turned his poetic gift to such everyday themes as laudatory odes to his friends and patrons, riddles, humorous ballads, etc. With increasing years, however, Halevi's muse grew graver and more sad. The poet found the inspiration of his middle age in the tragic fate of the Hebrew nation; its former greatness and its decline, its hopes and disappointments, its endless sorrow and longing. All the grievous history of his race found reflection in Jehudah Halevi's work. The lamentations of the long-suffering people resound in poems where the singer implores God to set a term to their exile in many lands.

"On the wings of an eagle didst Thou bear the dove (the Hebrew nation); Thou gavest her shelter upon Thy bosom, Thou hast hidden her in quiet places. Why then hast Thou for-

saken her now, so that, not knowing whither, she must wander through forests forever where snares are laid to entrap her every step. The stranger tempts her with alien gods, but she weeps in secret for the One, the chosen of her youth. . . . Why then, doth her heavenly Friend stay so far from her? Why do her enemies so oppress her?"

The most powerful of all Halevi's patriotic poems are those wherein he reveals his passionate yearning for the ancient homeland of Israel, for the Holy Land and Zion, the demolished:

"O beauteous land, joy of the world, abode of a great King! From the distant West my soul yearns towards thee! I burn with pity when I recall thine ancient greatness which is no more, thy temple that lies in ruins. O, that the wings of the dove might carry me thither! I would drench thy dust with my tears! I would kiss and embrace thy stones, yea the taste of thy stones would be sweeter than honey in my mouth! My heart is in the East, yet I am in the farthest West; how then should I find savour in my food? How should I keep my vows while Zion is fast in the chains of Edom (Crusaders), and I languish under the Moorish yoke? All the treasures of Spain could not lure me back were I but once to behold with mine own eyes the ruins of thy fallen temple."

This longing for Zion was no mere poet's frenzy soon to pass: it filled Jehudah Halevi's whole soul, and to see the land of his forefathers became the dearest wish of his heart. Towards the end of his life, he realized his dreams. When his wife died, he left his sequestered home in Spain, his relatives, pupils and friends, and set out on his pilgrimage to the distant Holy Land. After a long voyage across the Mediterranean, he reached Egypt and there met many prominent and learned Jews. From there he went to Palestine where the Crusaders, having recently taken the country from the Mohametans (1140) were beginning to make their presence felt. What befell the poet in the Holy Land history does not say; it is not known whether or not he ever reached Jerusalem, his ultimate destination. All we know is that he died in Palestine, probably not long after he arrived. A popular legend tells that, coming to the gates of the Holy City, he fell weeping to the ground and in that moment began his famous elegy, "Zion, thou wilt ask of the fate of thine exiles." While the poet lay there, an Arab horseman passed by, so the story goes, and rode his horse over the Jew's prostrate form, trampling him to death.

The elegy referred to in this legend is one of the noblest of his "Songs of Zion." To this day it is read in the synagogues on the ninth

day of Ab. The following are some extracts from it.

"Zion, thou wilt ask of the fate of thine exiles who send thee greeting, the remnants of thy scattered flock. From west and east, from north and south, they greet thee, from far and near. The prisoner in lifelong bondage to his love for thee gives thee greeting also. He sheds his tears like dew on Hermon and yearns to shed them on thy mountain-sides. Ah, could I but ease my soul of its burden there, where the spirit of the Lord descended upon thy chosen ones! Thou, the abode of Kings, the glorious throne of God! Why do slaves now sit upon the thrones of thy lords? How should I eat or drink when I see dogs tearing at the bodies of thy lions and how rejoice in the light of the sun when I behold the vultures devouring thine eagles? Hearest thou not the moaning of the prisoners striving towards thee in their prison cells? Can Shinear and Patras (Babylon and Egypt) think to rival thy splendor, or is their superstition comparable to the wisdom that is thine? Who is like unto thine anointed, to thy prophets, thy Levites and thy singers?"

Halevi was not only a great poet but a deep thinker too, as he proves in the "Khazari," his philosophical work written in Arabic and later translated into Hebrew. The foundations of

the Jewish religion are therein expounded in the form of a discourse between a Khazar king, a would-be convert to Judaism, and a Hebrew scholar. In the opinion of Jehudah Halevi, revelations are of greater importance than reason, since they come direct from God and human reasoning is liable to err. The revelations of Sinai, upon which the religion of Israel was based, are an indisputable fact, he declares, witnessed by tens of thousands of Israelites. God revealed Himself first to them, because they, before any other, showed themselves capable of knowing Him. It became their mission, therefore, to carry the truth to all the rest of mankind, just as the heart sends the blood all over the body, giving it life. The obligations imposed upon the Jew by his religion are multiplied in order that he might find direction in his every step towards spiritual perfection, and that his every action might be performed in the name of the divine law. Judaism strives towards the development of the spiritual forces latent within man. It differs from Hellenism in that it places truth and goodness above beauty. "Do not be carried away by Greek wisdom," Halevi used to say, "for it has only blossoms, but no fruit."

§ 10.

Abraham-ibn-Ezra.

Abraham-ibn-Ezra, friend and contemporary of Halevi, was born in Toledo in 1089. A man of outstanding intellect, he soon mastered the arts and sciences of his time. One art, however, he never learnt, that of living and working quietly. Throughout his life he was a stranger to success; everything he understood was foredoomed to failure. "If I had dealt in shrouds for the dead," he complains, "I believe not one man would have died so long as I lived. If I had been a candle-merchant, the sun would never have set until my dying-day." Abraham-ibn-Ezra travelled extensively in Europe, Asia and Africa, and wherever he stopped, he enjoyed the protection of wealthy Jewish patrons. While in Rome he began to write his famous "Commentary upon the Bible." This was the first commentary in which the Scriptures had been interpreted according to history and grammar without any arbitrary explanations. Up to that time, the Biblical writings had been expounded by law-makers, philosophers and moralists, each of whom exerted much ingenuity to make his reading fit his own ideas and serve his particular purpose. Ibn-Ezra, however, desired to arrive once again at the true meaning of the Bible of old and

clear its interpretations from the former commentators' mistakes. He succeeded to a considerable degree, but very often found himself unable to publish his opinions openly for fear of being accused of heresy. Wherever he met this obstacle he deliberately clothed his thought in very vague expressions from which so much was omitted and so much merely hinted at that only the highly-discerning could get at his meaning at all. In spite of these precautions, he was regarded in later years as a heretical writer, and his commentary was used only by freethinkers.

Besides the commentary, his most important work, Ibn-Ezra wrote many books on grammar, astronomy, mathematics and philosophy, as well as religious and secular poems. He was a past master of poetic form, but for depth and sincerity of feeling, his verse is far inferior to that of Halevi. There is a legend that tells how the two poets became acquainted. Jehudah Halevi was familiar with the poems of Ibn-Ezra, but had never met their author. One day a poor wanderer stopped at Halevi's home, without telling the poet who he was. Halevi was working on a long poem in the form of an acrostic. When he came to the letter R, the poet came to a halt, either because his invention had failed him or because he found himself at a momentary loss for a word or line. Greatly

annoyed, he left the unfinished manuscript on the table and went to bed. The next morning he rose and to his amazement found a beautiful line written on the page where he had left off. "Only an angel or Abraham-ibn-Ezra could have done this," cried the astonished author, whereupon the poor wanderer revealed his name; it was Ibn-Ezra.

After a long and roving life, he at last turned his steps towards home, but on the very border of Spain he died (1167).

The last poet of the Golden Age was Jehudah Alcharisi (about 1165-1225). A native of Spain, he spent many years abroad, mostly in the cities of Southern France. Later on, he made a journey to the East, visiting Egypt, Syria and Palestine. Alcharisi's chief fame rests upon his book called "Takchemoni." In this work, divided into fifty parts, where rythmic prose is interspersed with verse, the poet tells in a very vivid and entertaining manner the story of his travels and adventures in various countries. The account is enlivened now with poetic allegories, now with witty character portraits of the types he met, now with literary discourses. In the course of his writings, Alcharsi draws accurate portraits of the great poets who preceded him, Gabirol, Halevi, Ibn-Ezra and others. His own work marks the beginning of the decline of Hebrew poetical lit-

erature in Spain; he is rather a versifier than a poet and even classifies himself with the "imitators, who pick up the crumbs that fall from the table" of the great ones.

The Hebrew literature of that period was rich in everything except historical chronicles and descriptions of Jewish life in the countries where the dispersed people had settled. This lack was partially filled by the works of Abraham-ibn-Daud and Benjamin of Tudela. Ibn-Daud of Toledo (author of a religio-philosophical treatise "Sublime Faith" or "Emuna-Rama") wrote a short "Book of Legends" (Sopher-ha-Kabbala), where the chief events of Jewish history are recorded. The most important part of the book is that which contains the data concerning the history of the Spanish Jews before 1180. Benjamin of Tudela travelled for about thirteen years (1160-73), all over the then known world, and described his impressions in his "Masaoth Benjamin." He tells of the lands he visited, of the Jewish communities there, of the occupations and customs of the natives, Jewish and Gentile, of their legends, architecture, monuments and so forth. He writes not only of the things he himself saw, but also of those described to him by others. Like all the travellers of the Middle Ages, he very often does not distinguish between legend and fact; nevertheless much of the infor-

mation in his book sheds considerable light on Jewish history of that period and on the geography of the world as it then was.

§ 11.

The Almohades. Spain and the East.

In the middle of the XIIth century a vast calamity befell the Jews of Arab Spain. A new Mohametan sect called the Almohades, the enemies of all non-Mohametans, was founded in northern Africa. Its founder, who called himself "Mahdi" or prophet, preached the obligation to spread Islam over the whole world by force of arms. The Almohades first established themselves in Morocco, where many Jews lived, and these they threatened with instant death unless they accepted the religion of Mahomet. The Jews were desperate; a great many fled to Egypt or Spain and those who remained behind became converted in name only. The Jews and Christians who lived in other African cities conquered by the Almohades, suffered equally violent treatment. Synagogues and churches were destroyed everywhere and the unhappy congregations forcibly dragged into the mosques. Jews compelled to pretend conversion, continued to observe the laws of their own faith in secret.

Shortly after their first outbreaks, the Almohade hordes invaded Spain, occupying Cordova

and destroying the magnificent synagogues there (1148). They next took Granada and Seville and established their dominion in the south of the peninsula after crowding the Almoravides out of their possessions there. The fanatical conquerors treated the Jews in Spain just as they had treated their brethren in Africa. The flourishing communities in Andalusia were laid waste; the Hebrew schools and academies in Seville, Lucene and other cities were closed. Many Jews were compelled to embrace Islam though they, too, did so only nominally; others fled to the Christian kingdoms of Spain or to Egypt.

At that time a movement for freedom was gaining momentum among the Jews of Western Asia. The center of this movement was in Baghdad, the seat of the exilarch or chief of the communities of Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. The mountainous regions of Persia were inhabited by free Jews famous for their warlike spirit, and in the midst of these brave mountaineers there appeared a man whom the people believed to be the Messiah (1160). His name was David Alroy and he came from the Persian city of Amadia. He had received a good education in Hebrew and Arabic in the schools of Baghdad and there, as he grew up, he saw the gradual disintegration of the caliphate. He then decided to become an inde-

pendent ruler of his people and issued a proclamation to all the Jews of Asia to the effect that he had been sent by God to deliver them from the Moslem yoke and lead them to Jerusalem. The call to arms was answered by many Jews who flocked to Amadia with their weapons hidden underneath their cloaks so as not to excite undue suspicion. The legend relates how the Sultan of Persia, hearing of the Jewish uprising, summoned David Alroy to appear before him, and how he came without escort to the royal palace, fearlessly calling himself King of the Jews. He was thrown instantly into prison, but by means of magic, so the story runs, made his escape and reappaared in Amadia, where his followers received him with great rejoicing. The populace believed then that he was a miracle worker as befitted the messenger of God. The self-styled Messiah was, however, soon to fall victim to a conspiracy; he was slain as he slept by his own father-in-law acting under orders of the Persian authorities. But even after his death there remained in Baghdad a group of his followers who still believed in him as the Messiah, basing their faith on the miracle of his immediate deliverance from prison. Certain impostors profited by the credulity of the populace to further their own ends; they caused to be circulated amongst the Baghdad Jews a letter supposed to have been writ-

ten by the Messiah, saying that the day of deliverance was at hand and that it would be manifested as follows:

At a certain hour, near midnight, the Jews were to put on green garments and station themselves upon the roofs of their houses; a strong wind would then arise and carry them all straight to Jerusalem. The gullible followers of the Messiah gave the false messengers all their possessions to divide among the poor, and at the appointed time they did as the letter instructed. They sat on their roofs all night, the men with their wives and children, waiting for the miracle to come to pass. But the "flight" did not occur and at last they realized the mistake they had made. The impostors, having robbed them of all they owned, had completely vanished. The Baghdad populace jestingly referred to this time as the "flying year."

The conquests of the Almoravides, and later of the Almohades, in Spain, bound that country more and more closely to the Moors' native land in the north of Africa. Oppressed by the Almohades many Spanish Jews migrated to the more peaceful African kingdoms, especially to Egypt, then ruled over by the great sultan Saladin, the conqueror of Syria and Palestine (1171). A devout Mahometan, Saladin, nevertheless, treated the Jews with complete toler-

ance. He allowed them to live in Jerusalem whence the Christians had expelled them. In Egypt proper they lived in well-ordered communities, enjoying all the privileges of self-government. Their chief was a Jewish official bearing the title of "nagid" or exilarch. He appointed rabbis and cantors for communities and synagogues, settled civil and criminal cases in which Jews were the litigants, and had the right to sentence the guilty not only to pay fines but to suffer corporal punishment or imprisonment as he thought fit. The chief Jewish communities were those of Cairo, the Egyptian capital, and Alexandria.

§ 12.

The Life of Maimonides.

Moses-ben-Maimon, surnamed Maimonides (Rambam), was born in 1135 in the city of Cordova where his father held the office of ecclesiastical judge (*dayon*) of the Jewish community.

His student years fell during the brilliant epoch when the Spanish Jews and the Moors were giving so many eminent scholars, philosophers and poets to the world. In his youth Maimon diligently studied the Talmud and philosophy and the natural sciences, and he also read a great deal in Hebrew and Arabic.

But when he was in his thirteenth year the

Almohades took possession of Cordova and gave the Jewish inhabitants the choice of either leaving the city or embracing Islam. Maimonides' family chose the former alternative and set forth on a life of wandering and privation. As they drifted from one city to another, the young Moses pursued his studies with tireless energy, studying under Arab scholars whom he would chance upon in each place. Among other things they taught him was the science of medicine.

The hardships to which he and his family had been condemned for the sake of their religion, directed his thoughts however, mainly towards the study of the law and theology of Judaism, and he was fired with ambition to shed the light of learning and orderliness upon the obscurities he encountered in his religious studies. When he was but twenty-three years old he began his vast commentary on the Mishnah, itself the Biblical commentary which is the foundation of the Talmud.

In the meanwhile he had moved south with his family to Africa and settled in Fez. This city was also ruled by the fanatical Almohades, who forced Islam upon the Jews wherever they held sway. Thus Moses, his father and all his kindred were compelled to become Moslems outwardly, while continuing to observe the laws of their true religion in secret. But the Moslems soon found out their deception and they had to

flee to Palestine. (1165 A. D.) Their ship was six days out when a great storm arose over the Mediterranean, and they were all but wrecked. The wretched travellers suffered untold anguish and alarm, and knew their only hope of rescue was in praying for the mercy of God, which they did with much weeping. At last after a four-weeks' voyage, the ship put in at the port of Acco where the weary fugitives spent a few months before going on to Jerusalem. It was their ambition to visit the Holy City and pray on the spot where the Temple of old had stood. From Jerusalem they continued their pilgrimage to Hebron, where Moses spent one whole day in prayer in the cave that held, according to legend, the vaults wherein the Hebrew patriarchs were buried. Then the wanderers went into Egypt and settled in Old Cairo (Fostat).

In Cairo Moses Maimonides began to earn his livelihood by the practice of medicine, but he did not cease to work at the books he was writing on religion and philosophy. He soon became famous among Arabs and Jews alike as a physician of remarkable skill and a profound scholar. The illustrious Sultan, Saladin appointed him Court Physician, and the young doctor received besides the title of "nagid," i. e., elder or patriarch of all the Jews in Egypt. He thus became the spiritual guide of his co-

religionists not only in Egypt but in all the countries of the Orient, and from far and wide he would be called upon to determine questions religious and secular. After Saladin's death in 1193, Maimonides remained court physician to the new sultan.

In a letter to a fellow-scholar, Maimonides thus describes his daily life:

"The Sultan lives in New Cairo and I in Fostat (the old portion of the city). Every morning I have to report at court. If the sultan or any of his wives or children happens to be indisposed, I must remain at the palace all day, but even when my services are not needed I cannot return to Fostat until the afternoon. When I get home I find my antechamber full of people, Mahometans and Jews, persons of consequence and simple citizens, judges and officials, awaiting my return. I dismount from my donkey, wash, and then go to greet them, apologizing and asking them to wait while I have my meal. I then receive my patients, and give them treatments and prescriptions. In this way there is a continuous coming and going until evening. By that time I am very tired, but I nevertheless take part in scholarly debates which sometimes last until after midnight. Only on the Sabbath have I an opportunity to meet and speak with the members of the community and give them my instructions for the week."

Maimonides died in 1204 at the age of 69 years. In Cairo he was mourned not only by the Jews but by the Mahometans as well, and the Jewish community in Jerusalem declared a day of fasting and prayer in which to lament their great loss. His body was taken to the Holy Land and buried in Tiberias. His only son, Abraham, succeeded him as court physician and "nagid" of the Egyptian Jews.

§ 13.

Maimonides' Writings.

The fame of Moses Maimonides increased after his death when his works became widely known. It was said of him: "From Moses to Moses there was none like Moses," meaning from the Moses of the Pentateuch to Maimonides. And indeed no one since the ancient authors of the Pentateuch and the Mishnah had done as much as he for the development of Judaism. In his first book, written originally in Arabic and later translated into Hebrew, a vast commentary on the Mishnah called "The Torch," Maimonides presented with great lucidity the contents of the "verbal teachings." While the Gemarah often made the meaning of the Mishnah obscure and confusing, the "Torch" made all clear and simple. But Maimonides was not content with this. The many volumes

of the Talmud contained such an enormous and disorderly mass of laws, scientific data and moral teachings, that to study them all was a life-work in itself. It was also very difficult to pick out any definite rules and laws such as one might need for guidance, because of the innumerable conflicting opinions of the various authors of the Mishnah and the Gemarah. Maimonides therefore decided to compile a complete code of Jewish laws and precepts, founded on the Bible and Talmud. He says in the introduction to this work: "This work is intended to be a complete digest of the 'verbal teachings,' with all the rules and laws that have accumulated since the days of our teacher, Moses, down to the compiling of the Gemarah. I have called this book 'Mishneh-Torah' (The Second Law), so that after mastering the written teachings (The Bible), the student may proceed immediately to the study of this digest by means of which he will be able to learn the 'verbal teachings' (Talmud) without having to read anything besides these two books."

The "Mishneh-Torah," or, as it is otherwise called, "Yad-Hachazakah" (The Strong Arm), is written in Hebrew of a fine literary quality. It is divided into fourteen parts. The first part is called "The Book of Knowledge" (Sepher-Hamada) and contains the principal dogmas of the Hebrew religion. In another book, Mai-

monides established thirteen of these dogmas, as follows:

1. God is the Creator and ruler of the world.

2. He is, without question, One.

3. He has no corporeal substance and no human likeness; His Being can be conceived not by the senses but by the mind alone.

4. He is eternal and exists outside the limits of time.

5. A Jew must worship this God alone.

6. All the words of the Biblical prophets are true.

7. Moses, the teacher and lawgiver, was the first and greatest of the prophets.

8. The laws of our religion were given by God to Moses to be passed on to us through him.

9. This religion can never be superseded by any other.

10. God knows all our thoughts and actions.

11. He rewards those who observe His laws and punishes those who break them.

12. A savior of the Jewish people will one day appear, and no one knows how near at hand that day might be.

13. The day will come, which God shall be pleased to appoint, when the dead will rise again.

All these dogmas of Judaism are explained in detail in the "Book of Knowledge" and the same

work deals also with the moral duties they impose upon each individual. In the other portions of the "Bishneh-Torah" all the laws, rites and customs of Judaism are expounded, following a rigid order of classification, and in addition to these, the laws governing the family, the state and the community which had been made during the epoch of the Bible and Talmud.

Thanks to the code of Maimonides, the Talmudic laws gained a firm hold upon the Jews. The "Mishneh-Torah" became the indispensable manual of every rabbi, judge, or chief of a community. At first, this great enterprise of Maimonides' found many hostile critics who accused the author of heresy, of trying to curtail the study of the Talmud in the schools, and finally of settling in too arbitrary a manner questions which were generally held to be debatable. All these reproaches and criticisms came from the conservatives who still adhered to the old order and did not welcome any change.

Not even with the compilation of his Code of Laws did Maimonides consider his task accomplished. Two fundamental truths were the lodestars of his life—that which mankind had received through divine revelation, and that which is revealed to every thinking man by the searching of his own mind. As a believer, he bowed before the teachings of Moses and the other prophets; as a thinker he estimated the doc-

trines of the Greek Aristotle and other philosophers at their true high value, and modified or completed their doctrines as his own convictions dictated. The dream of his life was to effect a reconciliation between the truths of revelation and those of reason which he knew were fundamentally compatible. This stupendous task he accomplished in the work he wrote in Arabic, entitled "The Guide For the Perplexed" (Moreh Nebuchim is its title in the Hebrew translation). The basic idea of the book is that pure religion and pure reason are perfectly compatible. Both admit the existence of One God, the cause and origin of all existing life, and both strive to lead mankind to the highest degree of perfection. Since, therefore, the truths of faith and of reason are identical as to the origin and ultimate end of life, they cannot then differ at any other point lying between these two termini. The book proceeds to the application of these fundamental principles to the theology of Judaism.

Maimonides' "Guide" is divided into three parts. The first is devoted to the knowledge of God, the second to the dogma concerning the Creation and prophecies, and the third to ethical teachings.

Thus brilliantly did Maimonides complete the task which Saadiah Gaon had set himself two hundred and fifty years before. The works of

Moses-ben-Maimon are the crowning glory, both of the Jewish religious law and of the Hebrew philosophy of the Middle Ages. "The Guide for the Perplexed" achieved unprecedented fame; it was studied by Jews, Arabs and Christians (for whom a Latin translation was made). Besides to the works enumerated above, Maimonides wrote a number of other books on theology, logic, ethics and medicine.

CHAPTER III

The Jews in Christian Europe During the Crusaders—(1096-1215)

§ 14.

The First Crusade.

TOWARDS the end of the XIth century, the Jewish communities in France, Germany and other Christian countries of Europe grew so rapidly in number and importance that their continued existence seemed definitely assured. There was every reason to suppose that their development would go on unhindered until they reached an equal height of culture with the sister-communities in Spain. This, however, was not to be. For events were taking place in Europe which were to shake the very foundations of Jewry throughout the continent. The helpless nation, so far from having found peace, was but on the threshold of a future full of misery and humiliation which was to last for many centuries.

At the end of the XIth century the Christian nations of Europe joined together in a war

for their common Christianity against the Moslems who were at that time masters of the Holy Land. The Christian subjects of Islam were regularly oppressed, but special persecution was reserved for the Christian pilgrims who came to Jerusalem from Europe to worship at the Holy Sepulchre. In the year 1095, Pope Urban II convoked a church council at Clermont, France, at which he urged the assembled representatives of Christendom to declare war upon the infidel and wrest the Holy City of Jerusalem out of the Arabs' hands. The summons was answered by feudal princes, knights and bishops, also by the common people of France and Germany. Tens of thousands left their homes, their fields and estates, sewed a red cross on their cloaks (whence the name "Crusaders"), and prepared to go and fight the infidels. At the beginning of the year 1096, an immense army was already mustered, ready to set out. Amongst them there were some who had gone into the war out of an honest desire to fight for their religion, but most of them were influenced by hopes of personal gain. The knights looked forward to rich booty in the Moslem lands; serfs joined the war by way of earning their freedom which had been promised them as a reward, and the pious of all classes found inducement in the clergy's declaration that forgiveness for all sins was to be bought by becoming a crusader. This motley

army was joined by great throngs of common vagabonds, beggars and criminal adventurers. Before the leaders had time to organize the campaign, mobs of the crusaders overran France and Germany, plundering all the places they came to on their way to Palestine.

As for the Jews, the soldiers of the Cross were not content with robbing them; they must be killed or baptized. "There appeared," says a Jewish chronicler, "multitudes of people, savage and desperate, a horde of Frenchmen and Germans swarming upon us from every side. As they came to a city where we lived, they said 'We have set out to avenge ourselves upon the Ishmaelites (Moslems) but here are Jews who crucified our Savior; let us be revenged on them first. Let the name of Israel be mentioned no more, or let the Jews become like us and embrace our faith.' "

The spring of 1096 brought death and calamity to many thousands of Jews in Europe. In the German towns on the banks of the Rhine, they suffered the worst brutalities of the savage and bloodthirsty hordes. The ancient community of Worms was the first to receive the onslaught. Hundreds of Jews were stabbed to death by the crusaders, but as their life-blood flowed out of their bodies they still cried: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is One." Only a few of them preferred baptism to certain death.

Some committed suicide, so that they might not fall into the enemies' hands; women killed their beloved children, lest they might be forcibly baptized. The crusaders destroyed the Jews' houses, stole their goods, tore up and trampled on the sacred scrolls they found in the synagogues. (May 18, 1096.) A number of Jewish residents took refuge in the palace of Allebrand, bishop of Worms. He, either unwilling or unable to protect them, begged them for their own sakes, to consent to be baptized. They asked to be given a little time to consider their decision while the crusaders stood outside ready to lead them either to church or to the place of execution. When the delay they asked for had expired, the bishop opened the door of the hall where the unfortunate people had hidden, and found them all lying in a pool of blood: they had made their decision. The infuriated crusaders mutilated the martyrs' corpses, then they slew many of the surviving Jews of Worms and forcibly baptized the rest. (May 25th, 1096.) A youth named Simha Cohen, who had lost his father and brothers in the massacre, determined to avenge their murders before his own turn came to die. When they dragged him into the church and stood him before the altar, be snatched a dagger from under his cloak and stabbed the bishop's nephew to death. The crowd fell upon him and tore him to pieces.

Not until the last of the crusaders had left Worms could the bodies of the Jewish martyrs be buried. There were nearly eight hundred.

Meanwhile another detachment of crusaders was approaching Mayence. The local Jews assembled in the vast castle belonging to the Bishop Ruthard, and begged him for protection which he promised in exchange for a certain sum of money. When the crusaders reached the castle, the Jews took up arms against them, expecting the bishop's guards to come, as promised, to their aid, but they were sorely disappointed. The guards fled at the moment of danger and Ruthard himself, out of cowardice or treachery, disappeared from the castle, leaving his unfortunate protegés to the mercy of their butchers. Some, seeing that resistance would be useless, killed themselves there and then, and the rest met death at the hands of the invaders.

The Bishop of Cologne was more humane. Hearing of the imminent arrival of the crusaders, he sent many Jews out of the city and gave them shelter in surrounding towns and villages in his own domains; such Jews as remained in Cologne hid in the houses of their Christian neighbors and escaped, but most of those who hid in the villages of the diocese were discovered and murdered. Everywhere Jews were dying like heroes for their nation and their faith, and

those who were unable to resist baptism either returned at once to their own religion or committed suicide to atone for their unwilling apostasy.

From the Rhine the hordes of crusaders moved eastward towards the Danube, murdering the Jews in the cities of Austria and Bohemia, destroying and laying waste every place along their path. The crusaders themselves perished by thousands, some of hunger and the hardships of the long journey, some in combat with the natives of the countries they so barbarously attacked. A new army was mobilized under the leadership of Duke Godfrey of Buoillon. After three disastrous years, having suffered heavy losses on their way through Byzantium, they at last reached the Holy Land. They took Jerusalem by storm on the 15th of July, 1099, and when they had massacred the Mahometans, they herded all the Jews of the Holy City, Talmudists as well as Karaites, into one synagogue, and set the building on fire. There was not one survivor, and all the martyrs' possessions were carried off as booty by the savage crusaders. A large portion of Palestine fell into the invaders' hands, who called the conquered territory the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Thanks to the good emperor, Henry IV, the sufferings of the German Jews soon came to an end. Disregarding the protests of the clergy

and the Pope, the emperor allowed all the Jews who had been forcibly baptized to return to their own faith. He also traced the massacres and robberies of the Jews to certain members of the secular and ecclesiastical nobility and punished the guilty ones.

§ 15.

The Second Crusade.

The Kingdom of Jerusalem founded by the crusaders endured for several decades before the Mahometans again began oppressing the Christians. Then Europe began to make ready a new Crusade, this time under the leadership of the French King Louis VII and the German Emperor Conrad III. (1146.)

A French monk, Bernard of Clairvaux, exhorted the Christians to go direct to the Holy Land, but others, such as the fanatical German friar, Rudolph, urged them strenuously to deal first with the Jews in Europe, and either exterminate or baptize them before proceeding to the defeat of the Moslems.

In August, 1146, the Jews were again attacked in the Rhinelands. The first martyrs to the new crusade died in the vicinity of Treves and Speir; in many other places the Jews, profiting by the bitter experience of 1096, tried to ward off the calamity by paying enormous sums

to the feudal barons and bishops for permission to seek temporary shelter in their fortified castles and palaces. The emperor Conrad gave shelter to the Jews throughout his possessions, which included Nuremberg and other strongholds. The archbishop Arnold of Cologne put the fortress of Wolkenburg at the disposal of the Jews and gave them permission to defend themselves with arms against attack. But places of refuge were not everywhere to be found. In Wurzburg the Jews were the defenceless victims of a riot in which about twenty of them were killed. Isaac-ben-Eliakim, their beloved rabbi, met his death upon a crusader's sword as he sat poring over his holy books.

In the spring of 1147, the riots again occurred in some districts in France. In Charanton, the Jews gathered in a courtyard, defended themselves for a long time, wounding and killing many of their foes, but at last they were overwhelmed by a fresh detachment, rushing in upon them from behind. In the city of Ramerupt the mob attacked the Jews on the second day of Shebuoth. The rioters swarmed into the house of the famous Rabbi Jacob Tam, destroyed everything inside it and tore up his sacred books. The rabbi they dragged into a field where they beat him upon the head, inflicting cruel injuries upon him. "You are great in Israel," they said, "therefore on you we

avenge the sufferings of our crucified Savior." Just then a knight on horseback was riding through the field, and Rabbi Tam begged him for help, promising to give him a very valuable horse if he would save his life. The knight prevailed upon the mob to surrender their prey to him, saying that he would try and make a convert of the rabbi. By this ruse one of the most distinguished representatives of the Jewish clergy was saved from death.

Not until the French and German crusaders had left could the Jews breathe again. Then gradually they began to leave the castles and fortresses where they had taken refuge, and those who had suffered baptism returned to their true faith.

§ 16.

The Third Crusade.

In 1187 the Egyptian sultan, Saladin, took Jerusalem from the Christians and thereby put an end to the existence of the kingdom of Jerusalem. This retaliation was met by the mobilization of a third crusading army in which the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, the French king, Philip-Augustus, and the English king, Richard the Lion-Hearted, took part.

As before in France and Germany, anti-Jewish riots now broke out in England, where

the Hebrew communities, reinforced by many refugees from the persecutions in France, had for many years played a very important part in the industrial life of the country. The Jews of London and the other large towns were chiefly engaged in banking and various branches of commerce. They held, direct from the kings, the right to travel, and to buy and sell in whatever part of the kingdom they chose, but for these privileges they paid very heavy taxes. In the capital and in the provinces as well, many of them were exceedingly wealthy and lived in "houses of stone, like palaces." The leading merchants and bankers naturally were the object of much public notice, and their vast possessions aroused the greed of the kings and the envy of the Christians. All Jews came to be regarded as wealthy, whether they were or not, and this belief, together with the religious frenzy inspired by the impending crusade, created highly favorable conditions for an outbreak of popular hatred.

Richard I came to the throne just as preparations for the war were going vigorously forward. On the day of his coronation, various delegations came to the royal palace in London to offer their congratulations to the new king. A Jewish delegation came with the rest, bringing rich gifts, but their presence offended Baldwin, the archbishop. He told the king that the

honor of appearing in the royal presence ought not to be given to the infidel, nor could the presents of unbelievers be accepted without sin. Thereupon Richard ordered the Jewish delegation out of the throne-room. The court attendants roughly hastened their exit, and, the news of the king's action quickly spreading over the town, a rabble of plain citizens joined the crusaders in an attack upon the London Jews, killing many, and devastating their homes. In vain the wealthy members of the unfortunate community barricaded themselves in their tall and well -walled mansions; the rioters set the houses on fire and all within them perished in the flames (1189). As in the towns of Europe at the time of the former religious wars, many Jews took their own lives in order to escape forcible baptism.

After Richard's departure for the east with his army, other English cities became the scene of outbreaks similar to the one in London. An appalling tragedy occurred in York during the anti-Jewish uprising there when a crowd of Jews locked themselves in one of the towers of the city keep. The Christians besieged their stronghold for six days while they from the inside tried to force them off with stones; a monk was killed as a stone struck him in a vital spot. Very soon the food supplies in the tower gave out and the defenders were faced with the im-

possibility of carrying on. They held council as to what they should do, and Yomtob, their rabbi, said:

"It is clearly the will of God that we die for our holy religion. Death waits behind this door, and you will hardly be willing to betray your faith in order to prolong your life on earth by so very little time as you will have. The Creator gave us life; let us return it to Him with our own hands. Not only men of known piety, but whole communities have set us this example in ancient times and in our own day." His words took effect, and, with the exception of a few faint-hearted ones, all the besieged decided to take their own lives. The head of the community, a man of great wealth named Josce (one of the delegation who had gone to congratulate King Richard) first killed his beloved wife and then the rabbi killed him. The enemy, rushing into the fortress the next day, put to death all who survived. This event took place on the eve of the Great Sabbath before Passover in 1190. King Richard's viceroy ordered that the men guilty of this massacre be severely punished, but not one of them was ever found. They had fled in all directions and the noblemen, who had instigated the riot, made their escape into Scotland. During the reigns of Richard's successors, the conditions of the Jews in England grew steadily worse.

§ 17.

The Condition of the Jews in France and Germany.

The effect of the crusades upon the conditions of the Jews of Western Europe was to make their social and economic hardships far worse than ever before. Closer connections between East and West resulted from the movement of great masses of people from Europe into Asia, and Christian merchants began to supplant the Jews who had formerly been the middlemen of inter-continental commerce. With the growth and development of cities in Europe, Christian merchants soon outnumbered the Jews who found themselves everywhere forced into petty trade. Being debarred from agricultural occupations, the wealthier Jews had to become lenders of money, and this commerce was a source of endless conflict between them and their borrowers, resulting in later years in untold suffering for the whole of the Jewish people. Their social status in the Christian countries in which they lived, declined in proportion to their loss of financial prestige, and the general upheaval brought about by the Crusades, leaving the popular mind in a state of mental chaos where every kind of fanatical religious fury instantly took riot, rendered the very ex-

istence of the Jews exceedingly precarious. Living as they did, upon a volcano of public hatred likely at any moment to erupt, they were in a state of continual dread of death and ruination. Outrageous rumors representing the Jews as monsters capable of untold evil were eagerly seized upon by the superstitious Christian populace. The most terrible of these was the accusation levied against them that they killed Christian children to mix their blood with the unleavened Passover bread and ritual wine. Murderers of Jews justified their crimes by saying that they acted in retaliation for Jewish murder of Christians committed in secret.

One evening in the year 1711, a servant of the househould of the Mayor of Blois, went down to the river to water a horse. The horse shied at something that he saw there and the servant riding home in a great fright told the people that the thing that had scared the horse was the sight of a Jew throwing a Christian boy into the river. Thirty of the local Jews were arrested upon the accusation, and the case was judged on the "trial by water" which was one of the superstitious legal practises of the age. The servant was thrown into a boat full of water, and the fact that it did not sink was held to prove the Truth of his story. The Jews, whose guilt was thereby established were locked up in a wooden tower, around which faggots

for a fire were piled. They were then offered their freedom if they would consent to be baptized, but they proudly refused.

Thereupon, the faggots about their tower were kindled and all the Jews were burned alive (May 26th 1711). They suffered death with undaunted courage, singing, as if to taunt their murderers their hymn "Oleinu." The rabbis of Blois appointed a day of fasting in memory of these brave martyrs.

The French king, Philip-Augustus, one of the three European monarchs who led the third crusade, was insatiable in his thrist for money, and cruelly persecuted his Jewish subjects, using every means in his power to extort contributions from them towards the expenses of the war. On a certain Saturday when all the Jews of Paris were at prayer in the synagogue, he sent out an order for their arrest, and had all their property sealed up. They collected the large sum of 15,000 silver marks which they offered to the king and then he allowed them to go free. A year later he accomplished a still more profitable stroke of business; he published an edict giving all Jews living on crown-lands three months in which to arrange for their dispossession. Between April and July the exiles-to-be could therefore arrange to take along or sell their movable effects; as for their real estate, such as houses, wine-cellars and

storehouses, these properties were all appropriated by the king (1182). The abandoned synagogues were transformed into churches. The homeless Jews of Paris sought refuge in the dominions of such feudal lords as were willing to extend the shelter of their domains to them. Sixteen years afterwards, the king, being again short of money, revoked his edict of exile and allowed Jews to come once more to Paris upon payment of enormous taxes for the privilege of living and doing business there.

The Jews of Provence, one of the southern provinces of France, were the only ones exempt from the persecution and indignities suffered everywhere else by the unhappy nation of Israel. The feudal barons of Provence without exception, treated their Jewish tenants well, and the Christian populace, having lived so long in close touch with Moorish Spain, just across their frontier, were less superstitious and therefore more tolerant than the Frenchmen of the north. The Provençal Jews brought much culture into Europe, and produced a great many scholars and scientists, particularly in the field of medicine.

The era of the Crusades was one of sad deterioration in the civil and spiritual life of the German Jews. This was chiefly visible in the tendency of the persecuted people to drift away from the surrounding Christians, and hud-

dle together, just as frightened sheep, in momentary expectation of attack by wild beasts, will press closer against one another for mutual protection. Thus the Jews, in continual fear of some outburst of popular fury against them, held more and more aloof from their hostile environment, and kept within the narrow and secluded confines of their racial and religious interests.

Another unhappy aspect of the disastrous epoch through which they had passed, was their increased, almost slavish, dependence upon the goodwill of the emperors who alone seemed able to protect them against the unbridled passions of the common people. Thus, from the XIIth century onwards, the German Jews came to be looked upon as veritable serfs of the imperial court (Kammerknecht). The civil law did not protect them, but as part of the emperor's personal property they received the same protection as his other goods and chattels. No effort was spared to derive the greatest possible income from this property, and permanent "taxes for protection" were payable to the imperial court by the Jews, as well as various "extraordinary" fines, all of which laid a very heavy financial burden upon them. In addition to these, Jews living within the domains of feudal princes and city mayors were taxed for permission to establish themselves in those places, and in every case

where they became the owners of real estate a tithe of their revenues had to be paid over for the benefit of the church. None of these dues guaranteed them against popular attack, however, so that if they wanted protection against the rabble, they had to pay the authorities for coming to their aid. Frederick Barbarossa, for example, took strict measures to prevent attacks upon the Jews while he was away at the crusades, but for this service he received large sums in return which helped him towards the maintenance of his great army.

§ 18.

Rashi and the Tossafists.

Disaster and humiliation, however, were powerless to check the intellectual growth of the Jews, without which, in the words of Rabbi Akiba, Israel can no more live than can a fish without water. Persecuted on every side, the Jews found their only consolation in their spiritual life, in the study of their religion and remembrance of their glorious past. Even before the crusades, French and German Jews had been widely engaged in the study of the Talmud, thanks, chiefly, to the efforts of Rabbi Gershom and the "wise men of Lorraine." The year Rabbi Gershon died (1040), a man was born in the French city of Troyes who was to make Talmudic learning accessible to all who

desired it. This was Solomon Izhaki, better known by the shorter name of Rashi.

As a youth Rashi was a pupil in the schools of the "wise men of Lorraine." Like the "tannai" Rabbi Akiba of old, Rashi left his family after his marriage, and wandered from town to town, receiving the "words of God" from the lips of great teachers. "I studied under my masters," he says, "while living in dire need of food and clothing and with a married man's responsibilities upon my shoulders." Only after long years of work during which he mastered the Biblical and Talmudic literatures did Rashi at last return to his family in Troyes. It was not long before the young scholar's fame spread all over France and Germany. He was called upon to settle questions dealing with religion and the law, and students flocked to his school in Troyes. In all his expositions of the Bible and the Talmud, Rashi made it his first care to present his subjects in a way that even young boys could understand. But he was not content to achieve his clarity and simplicity only in his lectures; he was ambitious to make the study of the law as easy for future generations as for his own. Talmudic learning had become a matter of extreme difficulty, and an adequate understanding of the law was almost impossible to attain without the help of experienced teachers. Many years of study in vari-

ous schools were indispensable to any man who would call himself a well-informed Talmudist. Rashi's plan was to compile a comprehensive written glossary for use with the Talmudic books. In the commentaries he adds to most of the treatises of which the Babylonian Talmud is composed, he gives brief, clear and simple explanations of all the difficult passages in the text, and elucidates the intricate reasoning and discourses of the teachers of antiquity. A short note of his would often remove hitherto insurmountable obstacles to the understanding of complicated passages. With Rashi's commentary, it became possible to study the Talmud without any teacher; so simple, indeed, did this learning become, that it was commenced even in the primary schools throughout Jewry. His contemporaries justly remarked that the Talmud without Rashi was like a lock without a key. In all future editions of the Talmud, including those of our own time, Rashi's commentary is printed beside the text. A commentary on the Bible explained the ancient texts, not according to their literal meaning but with reference to the commentaries and legends of the Talmud. Both these works of Rashi's were used in all the "cheders" (primary schools).

Rashi lived through the horrors of the first crusade, and in 1105 he died in Worms, leaving

three daughters, one of whom had assisted her father in his work. Both she and her sisters married well-known Talmudists and bore sons who became famous for their learning. All Rashi's sons-in-law and grandsons carried on his labors where he had left off; one of his daughters' sons was the rabbi Jacob Tam, who so narrowly escaped death during the second crusade. (See § 15.) Jacob Tam, who bore the title of "rabbinu" (our teacher), was famous as the greatest authority of his time upon all matters pertaining to the law. He lived in the town of Ramerupt in France, and was the head of a Talmudic school which produced many famous rabbis. He wrote several treatises full of the most profound Talmudic learning, the best known being the "Sepher Haiashar." Every now and then Rabbi Tam would summon rabbinical councils for the discussion of various questions concerning the welfare of the Jews, and decisions would be taken to ameliorate their condition wherever possible. One of the councils' rulings was that disputes between Jews should be taken to the rabbinical "Beth-Din" which gave verdicts according to Jewish law and custom, instead of to the judges in Christian courts.

The scholar-kinsmen of Rashi with their disciples were called "Tossafists," or "those who add," because they wrote their commentaries as addi-

tions to Rashi's. The Tossafist schools, like the academies of antiquity, aimed to sharpen their students' wits upon the whetstone of intricate debate. They considered all the subtleties of the Talmud, tracing the discussions and laws back to their origin, and reconciling all apparent contradictions. The Tossafists' additions to the Talmud are to be found in all the editions of the Babylonian work, next to the text and Rashi's commentaries.

The French and Spanish Jews, unlike their brethren in Spain, completely neglected the study of philosophy and secular learning, devoting themselves exclusively to the Talmud. Only in Provence where Spanish influence had always been very strong, did the Jews occupy themselves with literary works of a wider application. Scholars of the Tibbonides family there translated the philosophical works of Jehuda Halevi, Maimonides and other thinkers from Arabic into Hebrew. The Kimhides, particularly David Kimhi, were noted grammarians and wrote commentaries on the Bible.

Indeed the condition of the Jews in northern France and in Germany were most unfavorable to the development of research in any branch of secular learning, and it was natural that the Hebrew scholars, living in the midst of suffering and hardship should bury themselves in their religious literature and trust to

finding courage and consolation therein, since there was none to be found elsewhere. They varied their Talmudic research only with religious and moral instruction. One of the Tossafists, Judah Hassid by name, wrote the "Book of the Pious" (Sepher Hahasidim) wherein, next to noble ethical teachings, many tales of superstition are to be found, striking fear into the reader's heart (1200). The following are a few extracts from this work:

"Abstain from flattery; say not one thing with the tongue, while in the mind you mean another, for tongue and mind should ever agree. This rule should hold for intercourse with foreigners no less than with Jews. Cheat neither fellow-Jew nor Gentile, for the Lord keeps watch over all the lowly, whatever their faith."

"If one should scold or abuse you, make no answer. Silence is the wise man's rule, for he says, 'If I speak I may regret later, but if I keep silent, there will be nothing to regret.' "

"Let not youths and maidens meet or sport together (in order to avoid temptation). One night a man was riding under the moon and he saw a number of wagons filled with men and pulled along by other men. The rider stopped them and asked why they dragged the wagons and they answered: 'In our life on earth we made merry in the company of women; now we atone in this manner for our sins.' "

Hassid's book is full of stories of dead men, ghosts and devils. A popular belief, there recorded for the first time, tells of the dead rising at midnight from their graves and holding services in empty synagogues and any living person seeing them thus or hearing their voices raised in prayer will surely die within a few days afterwards.

The calamitous epoch through which the Jews of Western Europe passed was reflected in a series of penitential prayers (Selicoth), which were read on fast-days in all the synagogues amidst the tears of all the congregation. The following lines from a Selica, written by a man who had been through the disasters of the second crusade, is a typical specimen of these prayers:

"Hear, O Lord, my voice entreating Thee. For the stony-hearted foe is upon me; I am about to fall under the knives of the evil ones who have risen up against me. My soul goes in darkness under the fear of death; I am in dread lest my strength fail me utterly. Already the savage hordes are at hand; the sword gleams as it is about to strike me down, dealing me punishment for that which I have not committed. My soul drowns in illimitable sorrow; the flame of torture burns within me. But my blood, sacrificed to the cruelty of my ruthless enemies, flows drop by drop into the dwelling

of Thy love, and Thou, counting each drop as it is shed, wilt demand full payment from him who puts me to this torment."

CHAPTER IV.

Centuries of Martyrdom and Hardship Preceding the Expulsion of the Jews from France—1215-1394.

§ 19.

Pope Innocent III.

AS a result of the crusades, the Popes found themselves more powerful than ever both in the temporal and in the spiritual world. The whole of Western Europe became as one kingdom under the despotic rule of the head of the Catholic church who, from his seat in Rome, sent his orders abroad to nations and their monarchs. Papal influence reached its zenith in the early years of the XIIth century under Innocent III. This stern and unrelenting priest, the ruthless enemy of every manifestation of free thought, saw a menace to the church in the fact that Jews lived in the Christians' midst, "infecting" them with their "infidel doctrines." Since it was impossible to annihilate all Jews, this Pope strove to reduce them to the defenceless status of outcasts and pariahs.

"The Jews," he wrote in his messages to kings and princes, "are doomed to everlasting slavery for the crucifixion of Christ by their ancestors. Like Cain, the fratricide, they must forever wander over the face of the earth, strangers to peace and joy. It is the duty of Christian rulers, so far from protecting them, to treat them as slaves and keep them apart from their Christian subjects, as is right for an inferior caste, devoid of human rights and scarcely to be tolerated." Only thus could the rulers of Christendom sufficiently indicate the gulf that separated the faithful sons of the church from the outcast sons of the synagogue.

The "Albigense Movement" which became rife throughout France at that period, was largely responsible for Innocent III's implacable enmity towards the Jews. Under the influence of the Arab-Jewish culture which had travelled northward from Spain, the Christians of Provence began to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, and very soon they realized certain fundamental discrepancies in the Catholic dogma when viewed in the light of the original gospels. A new sect thereupon sprang into life, called the Albigenses, its adherents professing what they called pure Christianity, wholly opposed to the creed of Rome. Pope Innocent III, learning of the existence of this heresy, persecuted the Albigenses with-

out mercy, and even started a crusade against them. The Catholic armies invaded Provence, slew tens of thousands of the offenders and laid waste the entire country. The Jews, who were regarded as the cause of the outbreak, suffered in consequence. After Bezières had fallen into the hands of the fanatical hordes led by the monk Arnold, about two hundred Jews were found among the dead (1209). "Kill them all," said Arnold to his crusaders, "and let God in His heaven distinguish between the guilty and the innocent."

The Inquisition, a secret ecclesiastical court, was established in Southern France at an early date. Its object was to search out and exterminate all free-thinkers, both Christian and Hebrew. Its activities were seconded by the monastic order of St. Dominic which was established at the same time, and whose purpose it was to protect the church from all manifestations of independent opinion. Thenceforward the Jews had no more bitter enemies than these friars, who persecuted and humiliated them without respite.

The Pope and his army of monks strove to sever all relations between Jews and Christians. In the year 1215, Innocent III summoned a church council to decide upon proper measures against heretics and non-Christians in all countries. Among other resolutions, a number of

terribly humiliating laws were passed against the Jews. The Christian rulers were ordered to allow no Jews to occupy any public office; nor to allow them to appear upon the streets during Passion Week preceding the Catholic Easter. They were further commanded to see that baptized Jews observed none of the laws of their former religion, and to levy upon all Jews buying houses from Christians a certain tax towards the support of the church. Cruelest of all these measures, however, was the establishment of the "Jewish Badge." In view of the fact that in most countries the Jews did not differ from other people in their manner of dress and might therefore be easily mistaken for members of other races, this council ruled that Jews of both sexes should thenceforth wear garments of a special cut, or failing that, a special badge of some brightly colored cloth sewn upon their outer garment in order to distinguish them from the rest of mankind. Later on, a disc of yellow material sewn on to the hat or cloak was made the universal badge, to be borne by every Jew and Jewess wherever they went. They were thus exposed to the derision and scorn of all the world, and could get no redress for the insults they endured. The wearing of this badge filled the Hebrew people with a sense of deep indignity, and their misery was increased by the fact of their utter

defencelessness. Not all the secular rulers, however, insisted on the observance of this shameful enactment of the church, neither was it observed by all the Jews in any Christian domain. The proud Spanish Jews living in various Christian countries to which they had migrated, refused to wear the badge, and elsewhere the wealthy paid for exemption from the law.

§ 20.

Persecution of the Talmud and Religious Disputes.

At that period the French kings were the most ardent adherents of the Roman church. The pious monarch, St. Louis, was as clay in the clergy's hands, and oppressed the Jews with great cruelty in his endeavor to convert them to Christianity. Not content with persecuting the people themselves, he made war, assisted by the clergy, of course, upon the Hebrew religion itself. Nicholas Donin, a baptized Jew whom his own co-religionists had ostracized, reported to Pope Gregory IX that the Talmud contained many passages and expressions disrespectful to the Christian faith. The Pope thereupon ordered his bishops to make themselves familiar with the text and find out whether Donin's allegations were true, in which case the book should be publicly burnt. The investigation began in Paris, the capital of the

kingdom. Some of the Parisian Jews had their copies of the Talmud confiscated, and the rabbis were summoned to explain the text. A public debate took place between the informer, Donin, and four rabbis with Jehiel, the great Rabbi of Paris, at their head. This event was held in June, 1240, in the presence of high officials of the court, ecclesiastics and nobles. Rabbi Jehiel denied Donin's accusations, and asserted that the Talmud contained no blasphemous opinions of any kind, and certainly no insults to Christianity in particular. But his efforts to defend it were fruitless; its fate was a foregone conclusion. Jewish homes were ransacked and all the countless volumes of the proscribed work were confiscated. When they had all been collected they were taken to Paris from every province in France. Twenty-four wagon-loads of them were publicly burnt in one of the Paris squares (1242).

The news of the destruction of the sacred books was received with bitter grief by the Jews of all countries. "A Song of Lamentation" telling of the burning of the Torah, was composed and sung in all the synagogues. It began with the following words, "Schaali serufa," which means "Ask, ye burned in the flames, what is become of those who bemoan your terrible fate!"

The destruction of the Talmud dealt Jewish learning in France a severe blow. The number of rabbinical schools began to decrease and the activities of the Tossafists soon ceased altogether.

Meanwhile the Jewish and Christian clergy in Aragon had also come into conflict. James I, the king of Aragon, which was the Christian portion of Spain, was a devout Catholic, and cherished a dream of converting all the Jews and Arabs in his domains to his own faith. The Dominicans taught Hebrew and Arabic in their schools, in order that the monks might be the better equipped to spread the gospel among the unbelievers. One of the Dominican missionaries was Paul Christiani, a baptized Jew, who travelled throughout Southern France and Spain telling his former coreligionists how the Catholic religion was the only true one, and his sermons were filled with quotations out of the Bible and even out of the Talmud also, which he averred proved his arguments. The Dominicans found in this man a tool ready to their hands. They decided to arrange a public debate between him and one of the most prominent rabbis, expecting that, in case the Dominican carried off the victory, the Jews would find themselves compelled to embrace the religion of whose superiority he had succeeded in convincing them. King James approved this

plan, and invited the famous Rabbi Rambam of Gerona to take part in the debate.

Moses-ben-Nahman, called also Nahmanides and Rambam (1195), was one of the most distinguished Jewish thinkers of the XIIIth century. A man of vast intellect, he was a famous Talmudist and was deeply versed in the entire range of rabbinical literature. No less famous for his secular learning, he was a physician and linguist, having a perfect command of Arabic, Spanish and Hebrew. Notwithstanding his scholarship, he was not a freethinking philosopher like his predecessor, Maimonides, but held the view that reason must be ever subservient to faith. In his remarkable commentary upon the Bible, Rambam appeared as an adherent of the "Cabala," or the new secret teaching concerning God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

This rabbi, whom the Jews regarded as a saint, was invited by the King of Aragon to meet the Dominicans in debate. Rambam accepted the invitation, though reluctantly, and arrived at the appointed time at Barcelona, where the meeting was to take place (1263). He imposed one condition only, that he be allowed to speak with absolute candor, and having obtained the king's consent to this, he began his speech with great courage and dignity. The debate was held in the royal palace, in the pres-

ence of the king and his court. Dignitaries of the church, knights and other eminent laymen were also present. The controversy lasted for four days. The chief points at issue were the following:

1. Had the Messiah already come or was he yet to appear?

2. Was the Messiah divine or human, God or man?

3. Which of the two religions is the true one?

Paul Christiani tried to prove that truth lay in the Christian creed, and quoted various passages from the Bible and certain vague Talmudic references in support of his contention. Rambam, however, declared that the Messiah had not yet arrived, since according to the prophets' predictions, he would be the bringer of peace to the earth and that all wars would cease at his advent. But, he pointed out, the reverse was the case; violence was rampant all over the world and blood flowed in fratricidal wars between nation and nation. So resolute and fearless was Rambam's refutation of his opponent's arguments, that the Jews of Barcelona were in dread lest he arouse the anger of the Dominicans and bring disaster upon the entire Jewish community in the city. However, the dispute ended peacefully, with Rambam the victor, and the king was heard to say that never had he

heard a wrong cause so cleverly and ably defended.

But the Dominicans, enraged, carried complaints before the Pope accusing Rambam's utterances of defaming the Church, and the rabbi was compelled to leave Spain. The aged exile, then in his seventieth year, set out for Palestine, which had long allured him. He arrived there in 1267 and beheld with great sorrow the ruins of the holy city of Jerusalem, devastated in the long struggle between the Christians and the Mahometans.

At that period Palestine was ruled over by the Sultan of Egypt. Rambam tried to unite all the scattered Jewish communities there and urged them to build houses of worship and to open schools of their own. He even succeeded in gathering about him a small group of disciples, but he did not live long in the Holy Land. He died about 1270 and was buried in the city of Haifa.

§ 21.

Spain and France. The Struggle Between Religion and Science.

In the course of the XIIIth century, the Christian kings of Castile and Aragon gained a number of victories over the Spanish Moors, forcing them out of the greater part of the country. Only one small kingdom, the capital of

which was Granada, situated in the southernmost portion of Spain, remained in Mahometan hands. Thus the Catholic clergy who were the Jews' bitterest and most relentless enemies, soon became as powerful in Spain as they were in the other European countries. The Church in Spain introduced the same humiliating laws for the disability of the Jews as had been passed in France, forbidding them to occupy public offices, to keep Christian servants, to build new synagogues, to share meals or to bathe together with Christians. Under threat of a heavy penalty, Jewish men and women were ordered to wear a distinguishing badge on their headgear.

In actual fact, however, these laws were rarely observed, for at that time the Spanish Jews were too powerful and enlightened to submit to such indignities. The rulers of the country, on their side, were always in need of the services of educated Jews, and therefore paid little attention to the demands of the heads of the church. The Spanish kings often appointed Jews as their ministers and advisers. For instance, during the reign of the Castilian king, Alfonso the Wise (1252-82), the post of Minister of Finance was held by a Jew, Meir-de-Malea, and by his son after him. The king's personal physician was also a Jew. Being a great lover of astronomy and astrology, Alfonso often invited mathematicians and astronomers

of various nationalities to his court. The master of them all was a Jew of Toledo, the famous astronomer Ibn-Sid, whom the king charged with the compilation of the celebrated astronomical calculations called the "Alfonsian Tables" which were used by scientists up to the time of the modern astronomical discoveries. In those years, the Jewish community of Toledo, the Castilian capital, was the wealthiest and most enlightened in all Spain.

The spiritual life of the Jews in Christian Spain was as many-sided as it had been under the Moors. The activities of the scholars and writers were two-fold: some devoted themselves exclusively to the study of the Bible, the Talmud and the complicated system of the religious law; others turned to secular science, religious philosophy and poetry. The teachings of Maimonides carried all before them in the realm of philosophy; his works were diligently studied and found many imitations. The youthful philosophers were fascinated by his freedom and independence of thought, and in their effort to follow him in his reconciliation of religion with science, his followers came to many daring conclusions. Some, interpreting the Bible in the spirit of scientific enquiry, asserted that the miracles therein described could be accounted for in nature; others preached that all the laws and rites of Judaism, aimed only at arousing

the religious impulse in the soul and the desire for well-doing, and deduced the conclusion that a man possessed of deep piety and a high sense of morality could therefore dispense with all formal observances. The spread of free thought among the youthful members of their flock gave much anxiety to the orthodox rabbis and drove them to strenuous opposition of science and philosophy both.

The conflict began in Southern France soon after Maimonides' death. Some of the rabbis, led by Solomon of Montpelier, branded all students of philosophy in general and the works of Maimonides in particular, as apostates (1232). This action aroused the indignation of the free-thinkers everywhere, and a bitter struggle ensued. Venomous articles were written by each side against the other and were disseminated throughout all the communities within reach. At last the zealots of Montpelier resorted to a still more unworthy course of action. They appeared before the Dominican persecutors of the Albigenses in Provence and said to them: "We would have you know that among our own people there are also many godless ones and heretics who have been lured from the truth by the teachings of Maimonides, the author of impious philosophical works. If you are trying to exterminate your own heretics, exterminate ours as well, and turn the books which have wrought so

much evil in our midst." A search for the books was accordingly made in the Jewish homes of Montpelier and all copies of the "Guide" and the "Book of Knowledge" found there were publicly burned (1233). The same was done with the proscribed works in Paris, where, so says the legend, the wood-pile on which they were burned was kindled with a candle brought from a Catholic altar.

This unprecedented alliance between a group of rabbis and the fanatical Catholic monks, aroused the indignation of the best representatives of the Jewish clergy, and the very men who had committed the indiscretion were filled with terror when they reflected what the possible consequences of internal religious strife among the Jews might be. They ceased at once to persecute the study of philosophy and the conflicting parties made a peace which lasted until the beginning of the XIVth century.

In the early years of the XIVth century there lived in Spain two famous rabbis, Rashbo and Rosh. Rashbo, whose full name was Shelomoh-ben-Adereth, was the Rabbi of Barcelona and the author of many works on the Talmud. In France and Spain he was considered the highest authority on questions of the law. Rosh, his collaborator, whose full name was Asher-ben-Gehiel, lived first in Germany as a student in a Tossafist school, and later in Spain where

he occupied the position of Rabbi and head of a Talmudic school in the city of Toledo. Pupils from all the countries of Europe flocked to this school. Rosh immortalized his name in rabbinical literature with a text-book of Talmudic law (Piske-ha-Rosh), which is used as a "key" to the Talmud. As a native of Germany and a disciple of the Tossafists, Rosh scorned secular science and even regarded it as a menace to religion. Finding the study of secular science and philosophy very popular among the Spanish Jews, he joined the opponents of non-theological education, to which party Rashbo also belonged. Preparations for the renewal of the struggle against the secular scholars were once more occupying the energies of the orthodox, and the local rabbis of Spain and Southern France in their district messages were once more reporting violations of the Jewish dogma committed by the younger generation in occupying themselves with science and philosophy to the exclusion of Talmudic learning.

In view of these protests, Rashbo, with the approval of Rosh and other rabbis, made the following declaration from the synagogue at Barcelona: "That all Jews under the age of 25 were forbidden to read works on philosophy or the natural sciences. That those who interpreted the Bible in the spirit of philosophy were heretics, to be excommunicated from the synagogue in

this world, and doomed to everlasting tortures of hell in the next. That their works were to be burned, and of secular studies none but that of medicine as a trade, was to be permitted.

This announcement was read publicly in many cities (1305). Well-known scholars belonging to the free-thinking party loudly protested against the rabbis' decisions, but without success. A steady decrease of secular learning, philosophy and poetry then began in Spain, with corresponding increase in Talmudic learning.

One of the last great philosophers of that period was a physician named Levi-ben-Gershon, known by the abbreviated names of Ralbag or Gershonides. He lived at Avignon in Southern France, and died in the year 1345. In his book "The Wars for God" (Milchamoth Adonai), he placed philosophy on the same plane as the revelations, and tried to prove the natural, instead of the supernatural, basis of religion. The zealots used jestingly to say that the author of the "Wars for God" waged war against God, not for Him. This work they disapproved of, but they admitted the usefulness of another of Ralbag's books called "Toalioth," an "instructive" commentary on the Bible.

After Rosh, the principal representative of Talmudic scholarship was his son, Jacob-ben-Asher. (Died 1340.) He compiled a new code

called "Turim" which contained all the laws, rites and customs of Judaism. Unlike Maimonides, the author of "Turim" does not concern himself much with the fundamentals of the Jewish theology and ethics, but confines his attention to outward observances and practical laws. This code, consisting of four volumes, gradually superseded that of Maimonides, and was used by the rabbis and scholars throughout Jewry almost until our own day.

§ 22.

The Cabal and the Zohar.

As the spirit of free scientific enquiry declined amongst the Jews, its place was gradually taken by a curious doctrine of mysticism which, having its origin in obscure legends of antiquity, was called the Cabala (legend). The followers of Maimonides had interpreted religion in the light of science and reason, but the Cabalists lent their interpretation many elements proceeding from the senses and the imagination. As everyone knows, there is very little data in the Bible concerning the life of angels and spirits, or man's existence in the hereafter, but these matters the Cabala deals with at great length, and as if taking for granted that legend and divine revelation had made them familiar to all. This "secret doctrine" first appeared during the epoch of the Talmud and was known in Baby-

lonia at the time of the gaons, but after the death of Maimonides it became widespread in Spain and France. Even Rambam in his famous commentary, showed a tendency to interpret the verses of the Bible in the light of the "divine mysteries" which had been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

Soon after Rambam's death in Palestine, copies of a sacred book called the "Zohar" (The Radiance), began to circulate among the Jews in Spain. All sorts of extraordinary rumors were connected with this book which purported to have been copied from an ancient manuscript found in Palestine by Rambam. It was supposed to have been written a thousand years before by Simon-ben-Johai, the great teacher of the Mishnah, while living in a cave. (See Vol. II, §50). Sent to Europe, the manuscript had been copied and distributed widely. The first scribe to copy the book was a Spanish Cabalist Moses-de-Leon, who died in 1305. Those who repudiated the Cabala declared that Moses de Leon himself compiled the "Zohar" and passed it off as an ancient document, in order to attract attention to it.

The "Zohar" is in old Aramean, very much like the Talmud, and consists of a number of proverbs written by Simon-ben-Johai and other religious teachers of the ancient world. They

follow the text of the Pentateuch and are arranged in order of its sub-division. Simon-ben-Johai is represented in the book as a saint and supernatural being to whom the angels revealed the profound mysteries of heaven, earth and the human soul, that he might communicate them to a few mortals whom he should select for the recipients of his revelations. The basic and commandments conceal deep mysteries, for idea of the "Zohar" is that the Biblical legends "How should the Torah be holy," argues Simon-ben-Johai, "if God had no other purpose than merely to relate such simple stories as those of Hagar and Esau, Jacob and Laban? Any man could have invented those. But no—those stories are but the veil behind which lie the divine mysteries which only the minds of the elect may know." Simon withdrew that veil.

"The August Saint (God)," he declares, "is a Being clothed in the uttermost mystery, remote from the visible world, yet closely bound to it, for upon Him all things rest and in Him everything is contained. He has, and has not Form; inasmuch as He supports all things, He has it; inasmuch as He is inconceivable, He has none. He appeared bringing nine torches kindled with His light and the radiance shone out on every side. He is one with those torches; they are the steps upon which the August Saint appears; they are His images. His head is the

All-Wisdom, each hair a different way of wisdom, His countenance is mercy, etc., etc."

Mysterious pronouncements such as the above make up a large portion of the "Zohar." Side by side with them are descriptive passages of extraordinary poetic beauty, telling of the mysteries of heaven and hell, of good and evil spirits. The latter often find their way into the souls of men and arouse sinful desires therein. With every breach of the religious law, man delivers himself further into the power of devils; the more faithfully he observes the law, the closer becomes his contact with the world of good angels. From time to time, the "Zohar" makes cryptic allusion to the "time of the Messiah" which will come "when the sixtieth or sixty-sixth year crosses the threshold of the six thousand years since the creation of the world (50-60-66, or 1300-6 A. D.). A terrible war between Edom and Ishmael (Christians and Mohametans) will then break out, and a third power will conquer both. These and other predictions in the "Zohar" led many people to expect the advent of the Messiah at various times when the circumstances seemed to correspond with those described in the prophecies, but their expectations were never realized. Despite which, the "Zohar" became the sacred book of the Cabalists, to whom it was a kind of Bible of "mysterious teachings" and in after years it was an

important factor in the development of religious sects amongst the Jewish people.

§ 23.

The Expulsion of the Jews from England.

During the Crusades the Jews in England were persecuted by the Christians whose religious emotion had been inflamed by the call to arms. After the wars against the infidel were over, the Jews still suffered at the hands of kings, feudal barons and the Catholic clergy. The secular lords regarded the Jews as their serfs and all their property acquired in the course of commercial activities, as belonging to their Christian masters. King John, who succeeded Richard Lion-Heart, was always short of funds and replenished his treasury by extorting money from the Jews by means of threats and violence. In the year 1210 an enormous assessment tax was levied upon them. One wealthy Jew of Bristol was commanded to pay the king's officer ten thousand silver marks, and when he protested himself unable or unwilling to disburse so huge a sum, the king ordered that he should have his teeth pulled out one by one until he had paid over the whole amount.

Following the church council of 1215, the English clergy, in obedience to Pope Innocent III, joined their confreres in the other European countries by taking a hand in persecuting

the Jews. They saw that every degrading law pertaining to the treatment of the unbelievers was rigidly enforced, and even added others to those passed by the council. The distinguishing badge took the form of a strip of colored wool four fingers long and two wide, sewn upon the breast of the cloak. No new synagogues might be built, and the Jews had to pay special taxes towards the maintenance of the churches. In such humiliating conditions as these, the spiritual life of the Jewish communities in England could not but deteriorate. Intellectual activity died. A great many scholars and rabbis, finding no place for their offices, went away to other European countries or to Palestine.

Under John's successors, the Jews were so cruelly oppressed that they begged for permission to leave England altogether; their prayer, was, however, refused, for they were a valuable source of income to the country. An English writer has remarked that the Jews of England at that period were subjected to all the persecutions their ancestors had suffered in Egypt, the only difference being that gold nuggets were required of them instead of bricks.

During the reign of Edward I, the clergy concentrated their energies upon the conversion of all the Jews, and the king gave the Dominican monks permission to preach Chris-

tianity to the infidels whom he forbade to "contradict or laugh" at his missionaries (1282). A Christian theologian of that period, the famous Duns Scotus, advised Edward to cause Jewish babes to be taken from their parents and brought up as Catholics. The Archbishop of London, about the same time, ordered all the synagogues within his diocese to be closed.

In these circumstances it became impossible for the Jews to live any longer in England, and the king had no choice but to allow them to go, which many of them had long wished to do.

In July of the year 1290, King Edward, without asking the ratification of Parliament, published an edict expelling all the Jews from England. They were given until the first of November to dispose of their property and settle their affairs, and it was proclaimed that any Hebrew remaining in the kingdom after that date would do so at the risk of his life. The Jews, weary of their long persecution, did not wait to be ordered twice. Before the final date 16,500 of them had already taken ship and left their country never to return. (October, 1290.) Most of the exiles went to France, but only to find themselves in the midst of more persecution of their unhappy people. All the disasters their fellow-Jews of France were destined to suffer during the next century, they had already ex-

perienced, and throughout their sojourn in France they drained the cup of misery to the dregs.

§ 24.

The Expulsion of the Jews from France.

The XIVth century witnessed no Hebrew persecution so cruel as that which was practised in France and Germany. The French kings had always oppressed the Jews; some, like Philip-August, out of desire to get possession of their wealth, others, like St. Louis, out of hatred for their alien religion. King Philip the Fair, a man of avaricious and greedy character, whose reign brought his kingdom to ruin, brought the extortion of money from his subjects to a fine art. Not only did he tax the Jews to the point of ruination, but he often parted his wealthy subjects from great portions of their fortunes by arresting them upon all sorts of pretexts and pursuing them with threats of trouble in store for them if they did not accede to his demands. Not even the proceeds of these methods of gouging money out of the people slated this king's insatiable desire for money. At last, like the covetous man in the old fable, he decided to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs, and by expelling the Jews from France possess himself at one stroke of all their property. Accordingly in 1306 Philip issued his order that all the Jews were to leave

his kingdom within a month, leaving all their goods behind. They might take with them only the absolute essentials of clothes and food.

When the appointed time was up, some hundred-thousand Jews set out as exiles from the various cities of France. All their personal property and real estate was seized by the King and afterwards sold to Christians.

Great was the misery of the robbed and exiled people. For the most part they fled to the independent provinces of Southern France and the towns along the Spanish border, in the desire to remain as close as possible to their home-land to which they hoped they might one day be allowed to return. They were not mistaken. Nine years later, Philip died, and his son, Louis X, succeeding him, brought the fugitives back to his kingdom, this being, so his edict read, "demanded by the common voice of the people." The exiles rushed back to their own land, but the homecoming brought them little joy (1315).

In 1320 a new Crusade was being preached in France; the armies of the Cross this time consisted chiefly of peasants and shepherds who flocked to the standard of Christendom. One of the Crusaders, a young shepherd, had spread the story of how a magic dove had flown down to him from heaven and commanded him to gather together an army to fight the unbelievers.

The story gained universal credence, and thousands of peasants from Southern France rallied to the shepherd. The crusading forces marched from city to city with their banners flying, and as they went their numbers increased, for they were joined by crowds of tramps and bandits, bent only upon the booty they might gain in the war.

As in the earlier Crusades, the Jews suffered the first onslaught of the Christians' religious ardor, and numbers of them were slain in Verdun, Toulouse, Bordeaux and elsewhere. Some five hundred took refuge in the fortress of Verdun which was taken by assault, and the Jews, seeing the impossibility of escape met death voluntarily at each other's hands or their own. The governors of the cities and the royal troops often tried to defend the Jews, but it was a difficult task, for the crusaders were looked upon as dedicated to a holy cause and it was therefore almost hopeless to attempt to restrain them. Only when popular feeling rose against the governing authorities and the upper classes, did the king order strong measures to be taken to disperse the crusaders, but small bands nevertheless remained behind in the Spanish towns just over the border, and continued to make trouble. About 120 Jewish communities in France and northern Spain bore the brunt of this "shepherds' crusade" (Geserath Heroim).

The situation of the Jews in France was again becoming more and more precarious. The king's permission to live in the country depended solely upon the amount of taxes they were able to pay for the privilege, and might be expected to last just as long as money was needed to carry on the wars in which the kingdom was often engaged. Debarred from the practise of honorable occupations, the Jews were forced to become lenders of money, and oppressed by the enormous taxes imposed upon them by the kings, they, in turn, bore heavily upon their Christian debtors, forcing them to pay usurious interest upon the sums advanced.

The French Christians, indignant against the usurers, made all the Jews the scapegoats of the few who loaned their money at extortionate rates, and thus it came about that the French rulers, by robbing the Jews for the benefit of the royal treasury, made them also objects of hatred to the rest of the population. The clergy contributed its share towards this vindictive end by inciting their congregations against the "enemies of the church." So unbearable was their situation growing, that the only thing left for them to do was gradually to emigrate from the country where they were being made more wretched year by year.

The exodus had already begun when King Charles VI published an edict expelling them

from France for ever (1394). "The King," said the proclamation, "having heard complaints against the Jews' transgressions of the holy faith and abusing the privileges granted them, has therefore decided to forbid their further sojourn in any province of France, in the north or in the south." They were given until the 3rd of November to settle their affairs, collect their debts and sell their property. At the end of 1394, many thousands of Jewish families left the kingdom the greed of whose rulers, the fanaticism of whose priests, the superstitious ignorance of whose populace had reduced them to a state of slavery and abject disgrace. Certain lords of cities and wide estates wanted the Jews to remain in their domains, but the royal edict could not be disobeyed. Only in some few districts of Southern France did any of the persecuted people continue to live. The rest migrated to Germany, Italy and Spain. No Jewish communities appeared again in Northern France for three hundred years, when towards the end of the XVIIth century, Jews came back to the kingdom.

§ 25.

Germany. The Ghetto and False Accusations Against the Jew.

While the Jews were suffering expulsion from France and England, their co-religionists

in Germany were also being oppressed and humiliated, but they were not expelled. The condition of the German Jews after the Crusades presented a tragic spectacle. There were hundreds of Hebrew communities in the cities of Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Switzerland, all cut off from the life around them, for the Jews were deprived of contact with Christian society and were segregated like outcasts in their Ghettos. These Ghettos were to be found in most of the cities where Jews dwelt, and were formed of certain quarters of the towns or certain streets, shut off from the rest of the city by gates which were locked at night. During attacks by the Christian mobs, the ghettos afforded almost the only sanctuary for the persecuted Jews, and whenever it happened that their enemies broke through the gates, whole communities were wiped out at once. The ghettos were congested and stifling; each house had to shelter many families. The law compelling every Jew to wear the disgraceful badge, either as a yellow disk on the cloak or a hideous hat, peaked and horned, was rigidly enforced, and anybody found upon the streets without these distinguishing signs, was heavily fined. Most of the German Jews were wretchedly poor, usually merchants in a small way of business chiefly dealing in old clothes. Those who were in better circumstances became moneylenders. No

more honorable occupations were open to them except in extremely rare instances. The Christian "guilds" of artisans did not admit them, and the merchants' unions kept them out of wholesale trade. The emperors and lesser rulers treated them as slaves, and kept them in a state of penury by means of taxes and contributions continually extorted. The latter were so-called rewards for "protection," though the inhabitants of the ghettos often found themselves without protection when the Christians set out to attack them.

A frequent source of suffering to the Jews of Germany was the prevalent practise of accusing them falsely of various deeds invented by superstitious mediaeval minds. The preposterous tale of kidnapping and killing Christian children before Passover (see § 17), was carried to Germany from France. There was another rumor to the effect that the Jews were accustomed to take the sacramental bread symbolic of the flesh of Christ, and cutting and stabbing it until it flowed with blood. Whenever a Christian child disappeared, or whenever one was found dead, enraged mobs instantly rushed into the Jewish quarter, killing and plundering the innocent inhabitants. Few were the German cities where such outbreaks did not repeatedly occur.

Once it happened that five Christian broth-

ers, children of a miller of Fuld, were found dead on the outskirts of the town (1235). The superstitious populace immediately decided that two Jews had done the deed and drawn the Christian children's blood to save for their Passover ritual. In the attack upon the Jews of Fuld, thirteen men and women were killed. The Jews appealed for justice to the Emperor, Frederick II, who appointed a committee of learned Christians to investigate the matter. If they found proof that the Jews were guilty of the practice popularly believed to be theirs of using Christian blood in their Passover ritual, then the Emperor declared he would annihilate all the Jews in the country. The committee, having completed its investigation, returned the answer that they had found no proof of the truth of this belief, so the Emperor merely imposed a heavy fine upon the Jews of Fuld. The indignation of the Jewish communities had, however, been thoroughly aroused by this baseless accusation and they appealed to the higher authority of the Pope, Innocent IV, in an effort to refute once and for all this slanderous tale. Innocent, a juster man than his predecessors, issued a bull to all bishops, declaring the accusation to be a base and malicious lie (1247). The following is the text of his message:

"We have heard the complaints the Jews

have brought to us with tears, saying that wicked accusations are made against them for the sole purpose of inventing a pretext to rob them and seize their property. Though the Scriptures say: 'Thou shalt not kill,' yet the Jews are falsely accused of eating the heart of a murdered child during the Passover. It is maintained that their law commands them to do this, whereas, in truth it strictly prohibits such practices. No sooner is the body of a murdered man anywhere discovered and the murderer not found, than malicious rumors charge the Jews with the deed. All this is simply pretext to continue the merciless persecution of these people. Without due process at law, or any previous investigation, without evidence against the accused or confession from them, they are wrongfully and relentlessly deprived of their property, starved, cast into prison, put to torture and condemned to a disgraceful death. Thus does the lot of Jews living under kings and princes such as these, become more terrible by far than was their ancestors' in Egypt under the rule of the Pharaohs. Owing to persecutions such as these, the Jews are forced to leave the places where their fathers have lived since the days of antiquity.

"Since it is not our desire that the Jews be unjustly tormented, we command you to treat them with kindness and amity. Should you

learn of false accusations being brought against them, try to prevent their recurrence, and be careful that they be not similarly oppressed in future."

Not even the Pope's bull helped the Jews, however. Year in and year out, anti-Jewish riots broke out in German cities at the season of the Passover. Sometimes the attacks were simultaneous throughout a whole province. In most cases, the lying charges were merely a convenient pretext to justify the persecutions, the real cause of which was the Christian merchants' and artisans' envy of their Jewish competitors and their desire to supplant them altogether in certain cities.

§ 26.

The Black Death.

The persecutions of the German Jews reached their worst in the XIVth century. "Since the beginning of the Jews' existence in the world," says an old German writer, "they lived through no crueller period than the XIVth century. One can only marvel that a single one of them remained alive in Germany after such massacres."

In the year 1348 a terrible plague, known as the Black Death, raged in Europe, carrying off hundreds of thousands with its mysterious infection. Whole provinces and cities were

completely wiped out; people went mad with fear; the wildest superstitions took possession of the minds of the ignorant masses, prompting them to every kind of violence and crime; legal restraint disappeared utterly. At last a monstrous rumor overswept the land to the effect that the Jews had poisoned the water of rivers and wells in order to destroy the Christians. The charge gained force when it was realized that there were fewer deaths from the disease amongst the former than amongst the latter, although the reason for this was that the Jews were more temperate in their habits and took better care of their sick. The alleged poisoners received ghastly punishment at the hands of their alleged victims. Massacres were perpetrated in Aragon and in Southern France, but nowhere with such ferocity as in the German empire. In the Rhineland, in Alsace, Austria, Switzerland and Bohemia, where the Black Death was exacting a fearful toll in human life, Jews were massacred by the thousand. They were burned alive, tortured, hanged. Often they were sent into exile or forced to become Christians. In vain the Pope, then Clement VI, attempted to appease the murderous fury of the Catholics. He issued a bull in which he showed the outrageous falsehood of the accusation against the Jews, by reminding their assassins that they, too, were dying of the plague and

that the same plague was wreaking its havoc in places where Jews had never been. Nobody paid any attention to his words; it was impossible to stem the tide of popular passion against the unfortunate enemies of Christendom. The burgomasters and city councellors of Strassbourg and Cologne interceded for the innocent Jews, trying to persuade the people that the plague was sent by God and not brought by men upon mankind, but the citizens drove away these champions of justice. The Jews of Strassbourg were dragged to a cemetery, locked up in a kind of barn built of wood and burned alive. Only a few, consenting in their despair to change their religion, were saved (1349).

After vainly attempting to defend themselves, the Jews of Cologne met a similar fate. Once more the Rhenish cities that witnessed the horrors of the Crusaders' passage, resounded with the lamentations of Jewish victims. The city council of Worms decided to burn all the Jews alive, but they, anticipating their fate, set fire to their own houses and perished in the flames. In Frankfort and other towns their co-religionists followed their example. Some of the Mayence Jews put up armed resistance, killing some two hundred Christians, but when they realized the futility of their effort to save themselves, they sought death in the same way as the others. Multitudes of the persecuted

race fled from the German countries into the neighboring land of the Poles where Jews lived more peacefully, protected by the kings and wealthy nobles.

Suffering, humiliation and poverty darkened the lives of the German Jews, and weakened their intellectual powers; the scope of their mental vision shrank to the narrowness of their ghetto streets. Even their rabbinical learning degenerated until it was quite insignificant. The Talmudists worked on commentaries upon older writings, but created nothing new of their own. Given their circumstances, freedom of thought was out of the question.

All the rites of their religion were observed with the utmost strictness in the home as in the synagogue, for these two places were the sole spots on earth where the persecuted and condemned Jew could find rest from his tribulations, and where he might feel himself a man once more, in possession of his soul. The family life of the German Jews was exemplary in its purity, its self-sacrificing love, its temperance and sobriety. The community was like a large family, united by the same aspirations and mode of life. Its activities were centered around the synagogue, in the courtyard of which the rabbi's house usually stood. There all matters concerning the community at large were discussed and planned; and it was there, when the

rioters were upon them, that the members of the community would gather and take their own lives rather than fall into the hands of their enemies.

The in-rushing mob would set fire to the synagogue, and the students within, as they gave up their souls, would cry their last prayer in ecstasy: "Hear, O Israel, our God is One." The generations that followed the martyrs kept their memories green; their names, bearing the title of "Hakodesh" (holy), were inscribed in the memorial books of the synagogue, and were mentioned in touching prayers for their souls "who gave their lives for the holy name of the Lord."

In the XVth century the intensity of the German persecutions diminished, though from time to time the Catholic clergy still incited their congregations against the Jews. About the year 1450 a monk named Capistran, called the "scourge of Jews," travelled about the country stirring up popular hatred against them once more, and due to his influence, the ghettos in several towns were destroyed. Some cities expelled their Jews altogether.

The literature of the German Jews from the XIIIth to the XVth centuries, dealt almost entirely with Talmudic research. The most famous Talmudists of this period were Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg (XIIth century), Rabbi

Israel Isserlein of Austria and Rabbi Israel Bruna of Regensburg (XVth century). Lippman Milhausen, the rabbi of Prague, wrote a popular work called "Nizahon" (Victory) in 1410 intended as a text book for the use of Jewish scholars in religious controversy with Christian priests.

§ 27.

Italy.

During the Middle Ages, Italy was the only European country where Jews were not persecuted en masse; and it was there that the first dawn of the Renaissance, the revival of spiritual and social progress, mitigated the darkness of mediaeval barbarism. The Roman Popes were not prophets in their own country. Innocent III and his successors, who so successfully encouraged religious intolerance throughout all the rest of Europe, were not able to inoculate with this pernicious germ Italy itself, then divided into independent republics and free commercial cities. Jews lived in all the Papal dominions, in the free cities of Lombardy and in Naples and Sicily in the South. The church laws concerning them were never really regarded even in Rome where, although the Jews lived in their own quarter, they were not otherwise kept aloof from the Christians under the law. Their status was that of citizens of a

special class, subject to the jursdiction of the Roman curia. The chiefs of their community were elected representatives (parnes), responsible to the Pope for proper payment of taxes. The "parnes" were invested with the right to summon councils, to judge cases in which their own people were concerned, to impose fines or excommunicate the guilty.

Economically also the Jews were better off in Italy than anywhere else. Their choice of occupations was free, so that they were not forced into petty trading and money-lending. There was no obstacle to their engaging in industry on whatever scale they chose. In Sicily and the South they even went in for silk-husbandry and agriculture. The Jewish merchants could not compete with the great Christians in the principal commercial sea-ports such as Venice and Genoa, yet they were not inactive in the international commerce carried on there. The lack of safe and convenient ways of transport and communication opened a wide field of usefulness to the Jews with inland commerce and agriculture, and the transport of grain and other products; they were the usual middlemen between consumer and producer. The wealthy did make a business of lending money on interest, but in this they were but the timid followers of these redoubtable Italian money-lenders, the Lombards. Contemporary chroniclers

declare that the Christian usurers treated their Christian clients far more harshly than did the Jews.

In 1430 the Florentine city authorities invited Jewish bankers to settle there if they would decrease their rate of interest on loans to 20%, because their Christian colleagues charged 33%. Racial antagonism on the score of usurious practices was therefore unknown in Italy, though elsewhere this had been the source of so much suffering.

The Jews of Italy could boast many famous physicians trained in the higher medical schools of Padua, Salerno and other cities, where some of the professors were Jews also. The Christian doctors, jealous of their Jewish confreres' successes, attempted their downfall by spreading slanderous reports of malpractice among their Christian patients. Thereupon the Catholic priests enforced the church law prohibiting Christians from being treated by Jewish physicians. In spite of this, the Jewish doctors enjoyed high esteem throughout the country; their patients included Catholic priests as well as laymen, and sometimes even Popes. Pope Boniface IX's personal physician was a Jew named Manuele who practised together with his son Angele. These two doctors received a document from the Pope and the Magistrate of Rome, exempting them and their descendants

from payment of taxes, in return for their unpaid services to the poor (1399). Another Jewish physician named Foligne, a professor in the University of Padua, fell victim to the Black Death which he contracted while caring for others already ill of the terrible disease (1348). Jews were often appointed as court physicians to kings and dukes.

With the opening of the Renaissance period when art and science began to flourish throughout Italy, the comparatively happy condition of the Jews gave scope for the development of their intellectual gifts in many fields. Like their Spanish brethren, they had a number of free-thinkers who shared the philosophical views of Maimonides, among others, Jacob Anatoli, who translated the Arab philosophers and Hillel Verona, the physician, who lived in the XIIIth century. Other free-thinkers were poets of talent, the best known of whom was Immanuel of Rome (died 1330), the friend of Dante. Unlike most Hebrew poets, Immanuel did not write religious verse but sang on the secular themes of love, joy and happiness, sometimes employing his gifts to hold stupidity and ignorance up to ridicule. His verse is melodious and of extraordinary beauty. In "Hatofeth ve Haeden," (Hell and Heaven), he criticizes the short comings of his fellows; placing those Talmudists who despised secular learning, quack

doctors and untalented writers among the dwellers in Hell, and according a place in paradise even to non-Jews, provided they profess monotheism.

The rabbis of later years, declared Immanuel a heretic and forbade the reading of his works.

CHAPTER V

The Jews' Last Century in Spain—1391-1492.

§ 28.

Jewish Courtiers and the Massacre in Seville.

BRIGHT days and dark alternated in the lives of the Spanish Jews throughout the XIVth and XVth centuries. By virtue of their intellectual culture and their commercial ability, they had acquired great prestige in the two Spanish kingdoms. The rulers of Aragon and of Castille valued their talents at their true worth and invited the ablest Jews in their monarchies to assume important political offices. Hardly one of these kings but had a Jewish official at court, as tax-collector, minister of finance, general councillor, physician or scientist in some other branch. Such Jewish names as Benevente, Vacar, Abulafia, Pihon, Abarbanell, figure in the roster of grandees and courtiers of that period. These prominent and titled Jews rendered signal service to the kingdom at large, but did very little for their own people; in fact they pos-

sessed none of the patriotic virtues which had distinguished their predecessors in high places, Hasdia, Shaprut and Samuel Nagid. They followed the lead of the other Spanish courtiers and cared only to amass vast wealth and live luxurious lives as they did. Christian Spaniards and Jewish, belonging to the upper classes, dressed their wives and children in silks and jewels and rode about the town in luxurious equipages. But as the Christian populace saw more and more Jews attaining to this degree of prosperity, their envy was awakened, and they would say to themselves: "See how rich those Jews are becoming; soon all of them will be grandees." And the fact that the few wealthy ones had acquired their riches in a very short time, either out of legitimate profits in business or out of usury, drew down upon all the rest of their co-religionists the enmity of the common people, although, in truth, the vast majority of Jews lived very frugally and industriously indeed. Taking advantage of the rising animosity against the Jews, certain people began to fan the disapprobation of the populace into a flame of active hatred.

They had no more bitter enemies than the high nobility and the clergy, for the haughty Spanish aristocrats could not tolerate the presence of aliens in race and religion in their midst, competing successfully with them for the highest

posts in the kingdom; and as for the clergy, most of whom were Dominican friars, they regarded the elevation of the Jews as a direct insult to the church. In their opinion, all Jews, being the enemies of the church, should be kept in all places in a state of slavery.

In spite of the foes on every side of them, the Jewish communities in Spain, nevertheless, flourished and enjoyed considerable freedom in the administration of their own affairs. Castille alone had more than eighty communities, numbering about a million in all. The most notable Jewish settlements were those of Toledo, Burgos and Seville. Rabbis and judges having power to try civil and criminal cases in which all parties were Jews, were the chiefs of the communities. As in Babylonia and under the Caliphates of former times, the Jews of Spain were to a large degree self-governing, and little interfered with so far as their own affairs were concerned. Participation in the affairs of the Christian kingdom also fell to the share of some of the most influential Jews, as has been said. But the idea of their separateness as Jews on the one hand, and of their influence as Spaniards connected with the state administration on the other, incurred the jealous dissatisfaction of the Catholic clergy and nobility.

Fernand Martinez, a fanatical priest of Seville, resolved to stir up the Christian population

to attack the Jews openly. His sermons were filled with passionate denunciations of the "false doctrines" of Judaism, and he was tireless in pointing out the increasing prosperity of the Hebrew communities and the peril in which the kingdom stood on account of it. Martinez was appointed to the office of assistant to the archbishop, and thereupon he circulated amongst the priests throughout the diocese of Seville, propaganda urging them to call upon the Catholic Spaniards to rise and "demolish to their very foundations all the synagogues wherein those enemies of God and of the Church, called the Jews, conduct the idolatrous rites of their religion." On the 15th day of March, 1391, he addressed an immense crowd gathered in a public square, exhorting them to violence against the unbelievers in their midst. The inflamed populace immediately attacked the inoffensive community of Seville Jews, and the riot spread with great rapidity. But for once the city authorities intervened; the outbreak was suppressed and a few of the ringleaders were brought to justice. Martinez, however, was not among them, though he had been the primary cause of the uprising. Under a cloak of pious fervor, he continued his anti-Jewish agitations with undiminished energy, and in the end attained his goal. Three months, later fresh riots broke out in Seville, this time upon so large a scale that it was found impossible

to suppress them. One morning, the Catholics, as if by common consent, came rushing from all sections of the city upon the Jewish quarter (Juderia) and setting fire to the buildings, they fell to killing and robbing all the inhabitants. (June 6, 1391). Some four thousand Jews were murdered or taken prisoners or sold into slavery to Arab merchants; the rest, in order to escape death, allowed themselves to be baptized. Nothing was left of the ancient and wealthy community, and such synagogues as escaped the fire were turned into Christian churches.

The massacre in Seville gave the signal for similar outbreaks in other cities. In Toledo and Cordova Jews were killed by the frenzied mobs. Many though the martyrs were, there were also many faint-hearted ones who feigned to accept Christianity in order to save their lives. From Castile, the wave of anti-Semitism threatened to overwhelm the kingdom of Aragon also. In Valencia the Catholics descended upon the Jewish quarter, crying: "Martinez has come. He will baptize you all." The resistance of the Jews still further enraged the rioters, and the community of five thousand souls was soon in ruins. Some of the inhabitants perished by the sword, some accepted the cross, some fled. The Jews of Barcelona locked themselves inside the fortress of the city, believing themselves safe in the protection of the local governor and other influential

citizens, but disaster pursued them into their refuge, for the furious mob set fire to the fortress. The Jews saw that all hope of escape was over, and some slew themselves while others threw themselves off the tower and were instantly killed on the ground beneath. Others were slain by the enemy and others again turned from their persecuted religion for the sake of life. Only very few succeeded in escaping from the city.

The Spanish refugees settled in the adjoining country of Portugal where Jewish communities had existed undisturbed for a long time. The Portuguese Jews, who were very active in the industrial development of their maritime kingdom, lived in free communities of which the Head Rabbi was the acknowledged chief with very extensive powers. Jews were very often appointed by the kings to such important posts as those of ministers or advisors. After the Seville massacres of 1391, many refugees from Spain found shelter in Portugal, and those who had been forcibly baptized returned to the open observance of their true faith. This return rendered them liable to dire punishment, but Moses Navarro, the chief rabbi of Portugal, who was also personal physician to the king, was able to ward off the disaster that threatened these ex-Catholics. This he achieved by means of showing the king two Papal edicts forbidding the

forcible baptism of Jews, and in obedience to these, the king issued a proclamation (1392), to the effect that Jews who, having been forcibly baptised, returned to their own religion, were not to be molested for their action, and he ordered that the Papal message on which his edict was based should be published all over his kingdom.

Not all the Spanish Jews fled to Portugal, however. Many settled in the Mahometan territories of northern Africa where they established as in the time of Maimonides, large communities.

Among the many Jews of great eminence to whom the massacres of 1391 brought deep personal suffering, was the famous philosopher Hasdai Crescas of Barcelona, whose son had died a martyr to his faith. The father, in the grief of his bereavement, expressed his submission to the will of God in the following humble words:

"I gave my son to God, a burnt offering. I accept the righteous judgment of the Lord, and I am consoled because He let my child die so glorious a death."

His own sorrow and the hardly less personal grief with which he witnessed the disaster to his people as a whole, did not prevent Crescas from devoting himself to the study of theology and philosophy, but his experiences left their mark

upon his works. Unlike Maimonides, Crescas preached that faith must triumph over reason, not reason over faith. Of the two Mosaic commandments, "Know thy God" and "Love thy God with all thine heart," he held the latter to be the more important. In his book "The Light of God" (Or Adonai), he alters the Creed as established by Maimonides, and enlarged it. A younger contemporary of Crescas', Joseph Albo (died 1444), the author of a remarkable work called "Dogmas" (Iccarim), shared Crescas' opinions with regard to the theology of Maimonides, whose thirteen articles of the creed he condenses into three, viz., the existence of God, the "revelation" or divine origin of the Torah and reward in the hereafter.

§ 29.

The Marranos.

The events of 1391 exerted a profound influence upon the lives of those of the Spanish Jews who had purchased their lives with the acceptance of Christianity in the disastrous year of the massacres. These converts, who were exceedingly numerous, had thought that as soon as the wave of anti-Semitism passed, they would be allowed to return to the religion of their fathers. But they were mistaken. Only the baptized Jews who had fled abroad were able openly to profess their own faith; all the neo-Christians

remaining in Spain, continued there strictly supervised by the Catholic clergy. However much in secret they might observe the Jewish law, they had to stay Christian to outward appearance and go to church. Their enforced duplicity caused them great unhappiness, for their apostasy earned them the title of "anussim" (slaves) from the Jews and "marranos" (outcasts) or neo-Christians, from the Spaniards.

The Marrano population in Spain increased rapidly. Encouraged by their former successes, the Catholics invented all manner of pretexts by which to force more and more Jews to embrace Christianity, and in this they were greatly assisted by certain of the apostates who were led by hope of personal gain to join the ranks of their people's enemies. Solomon Halevy, the ex-Talmudist who took the name of Paul after his baptism, became eventually Bishop of Burgos and tutor of the prince of Castille. Being a great favorite of the Pope, Paul of Burgos was ever anxious to please his superiors and increase the harvest of Jewish converts. By the written and spoken word, he was most energetic in denouncing the "false doctrines of the rabbis," and in demonstrating the superiority of the new religion. Meanwhile, Dominican monks were occupied in traveling all over the country, forcing their way into synagogues with crosses in their hands, and commanding the Jews with

many threats, to allow themselves to be baptized. Crowds of Catholics would stand around the synagogues, ready to attack at a sign from their leaders. These methods of intimidation increased the number of Marranos by thousands.

In the year 1412, Pope Benedict XIII invited the most prominent Spanish rabbis to attend a religious debate in the city of Tortosa at which their opponents were to be equally distinguished representatives of the church; and heavy penalties for non-acceptance of this invitation ensured their presence on the day appointed. Twenty-two representatives of Jewish communities appeared at Tortosa, amongst them being scholars, physicians and philosophers of note. Joseph Albo, the author of the Iccarim, was one. The church was represented by Pope Benedict himself, a large number of bishops and one converted Jew, Joshua Lorci, whose baptized name was Geronimo de Santa-Fe. The debate began in February, 1413, and lasted over one year and nine months, sixty-nine sessions having been held in that time. Each side maintained the truth of its own faith, but whereas the Jews were obliged to speak with caution and reserve, the Catholics were held back by no impediments at all, but could insult Judaism and threaten the Jews to their hearts' content. No one can tell what might have been the end of Benedict's experiment, had not the ecclesiastical council then

in session at Constance deposed him and elected a new pope in his stead.

The Spanish clergy strove for many years to make as many converts as possible amongst the Jews, but when at last they found their aim achieved, another and greater problem confronted them, for it was harder to make the new Catholics keep the religion than it had been to make them embrace it in the first place. There were by that time tens of thousands of Marranos in Spain. Marriage had allied many of them to the noble families of Spain and they were closely connected at court. Marrano ministers, generals and bishops won distinction for themselves on account of their intellect and learning. Some of them renounced their own people entirely and were absorbed in Spanish society, but most of them observed the laws of Judaism in secret. Parents taught their children the fundamental tenets of the true faith, and instilled in them an ardent love for their presecuted race. These deceitful practices were known to the clergy and aroused their deep indignation. They denounced these "apostates" violently in all their sermons, and incited their congregations against them. One day a religious procession passing through the streets of Cordova found the windows of all the Marranos closed and devoid of the decorations with which good Catholics adorned the streets on such occa-

sions. A sudden rumor was spread that a girl in one of the Marrano houses had thrown some dirty water out of the window as the procession was going by, which splashed the image of the Holy Virgin. Led by a blacksmith, the infuriated crowd seized burning torches and rushed with them into the Marranos' houses, setting them all on fire. They plundered the dwellings, killing all within, violating the women, and sparing no one, not even the children. The riot lasted for three days, and when it was over, an enormous number of Marranos had perished in Cordova and in neighboring cities (1473).

§ 30.

The Inquisition. Torquemada.

Upon the uniting of Aragon and Castille into a single kingdom by the marriage of Ferdinand the Catholic to Isabella of Castille (1474), a systematic movement to destroy the Jews and the Marranos began throughout Spain. The joining of these two royal houses was expected to create a united and powerful kingdom, but both the king and the queen were entirely dominated by the clergy, and therefore introduced into their government the pernicious spirit of intolerance towards all that was not Catholic which animated the officials of the church, and which was the cause of the country's ultimate decline.

In her youth the pious Isabella had made a vow to her father confessor that when she became queen she would devote all her power to the eradication of the "unbeliever" throughout her dominions. So shortly after their marriage, she and her husband petitioned Rome to grant them permission to establish a special tribunal for the searching out and punishment of all Christians suspected of heresy and free-thinking, in a word of the Marranos. The Pope (Sixtus IV) gave his consent and the tribunal thus established was called the Holy Inquisition. The first of these courts of religious investigation was held at Seville in 1480; the judges were commanded, under pain of dire retribution, tion with a representative of the king. Wholesale arrests of Marranos suspected of leanings towards Judaism then began. All Christians were commanded, under pain of dire retribution, to report every Marrano they saw not merely observing important Jewish laws, but even committing such trifling observances of their abandoned faith as wearing better clothes or eating better food on Saturday than on other days, or standing while at prayer with faces turned towards the east. No matter how unreliable the source of these reports, they were never verified, and very soon the prisons of Seville were crowded with Marranos. The wretched suspects were put to hideous tortures in order to

extract from them confessions of secret connection with Judaism in which not only themselves, but their friends and relatives also, were implicated. A large square outside the city boundary was made the place of execution for prisoners convicted by the Inquisition, and there, on January 6, 1481, the first "auto-da-fe" (act of faith), took place in Seville attended by solemn religious ceremonial. Six Marranos were burned at the stake, and some days later a second group was similarly put to death, after which executions became of very common occurrence. By November of that year, in ten months, that is after the establishment of the Inquisition, some three hundred Marranos had been burned at the stake in Seville alone. Many of them met their death with great fortitude, having refused to deny their connection with Judaism. Their property was confiscated to the royal treasury, so that the extinction of the Marranos was not only an action to "give pleasure to the Lord" but a very profitable business into the bargain. The more wealthy heretics burned, the better filled was the exchequer of the greedy Ferdinand.

The effect of the Inquisition's brutalities upon the Marranos was to rouse all the spirit of courageous defiance within them, so they turned with new ardor to the religion for the sake of which they were enduring so much suffering. Although many fled to northern Africa and to other coun-

tries where they could openly profess their true faith, others, remaining in Spain, drew closer to the Jews, their brethren, and were ready to suffer all with them. Without thought of the danger that hung over them, they organized clandestine meetings for common prayer, celebrated the "seder" at Passover and observed the other rites of their religion. They brought up their children in the ideal of the same self-sacrifice and love for their forefathers' faith as animated themselves.

None of these happenings escaped the vigilance of the Inquisition which now began to concentrate its attention upon the Jews as the chief instrumnts in luring Marranos away from Catholicism.

Just as matters had arrived at this stage, Thomas Torquemada became the Grand Inquisitor for the whole of Spain (1483). This beast in human form was a Dominican monk and the queen's confessor, and he it was who introduced into the procedure of the Inquisition the monstrous and frightful tortures that became a symbol of horror not only in his own generation but for all time. His "Constitution of the Inquisition" was in reality but a trap laid with consummate craft for the apprehension of heretics; no one caught in it ever came out alive. Wherever evidence or witnesses were lacking to convict the suspect, his fate was put to the test

of his endurance under diabolical torture, under which he could usually be made to confess whatever the inquisitor wanted to make him confess. Often too, in order to save himself from further unendurable agonies, the unfortunate Marrano would implicate others who were suspected of sharing his own opinions. Each session of the tribunal, therefore, inaugurated a new period of raids, investigations, arrests and trials.

Many other cities besides Seville had their own Inquisition tribunals. In Aragon the chief inquisitor was the priest Arbues, who, following the example of Torquemada, inflicted such atrocious torture upon the Marranos in Saragossa and its environs, that in the end he paid for his crimes with his own life. A small company of rich and influential Marranos decided that the brutal inquisitor should be done away with, and accordingly three of them lay in wait for him at daybreak one morning when they knew he would go into his church alone to officiate at the early mass. As he knelt at the altar they rushed forward and stabbed him to death (1485). The only result this act of retribution had was to strengthen the power of the Inquisition. After the execution of the conspirators, which was done in the most inhuman manner, the arrests of Marranos increased daily. "All over Spain and her islands," says Isaac Arama, a preacher of that time, "smoke rises to the sky from the

wood-piles on which the suspect Jews are being burned. One-third of the Marranos have perished already; one-third have fled, and wander as fugitives from one place to another; and one-third lives on in dire fear and trembling."

Torquemada did not consider his task accomplished with the mere burning of the Marranos; for he found that the survivors could not be inspired with due love for Christianity. He thereupon sought to show Ferdinand and Isabella that it was the Jews who lay at the root of the evil, for they resorted to every means in their power to make the Marranos renounce the church they had once espoused. By order of the authorities, the strictest watch was kept to prevent contact between Jews and Marranos. Certain special restrictions were being invented meanwhile for the further disability of the former, and the consequences of the new legislation were terrible indeed.

§ 31.

The Expulsion of the Jews From Spain and Portugal.

A desperate war was then in progress between Spain and the Moorish kingdom which still survived in the south of the Pyrenean peninsula. Ferdinand and Isabella had determined to uproot the last trace of Arab domination in Spain, and bring the whole country

finally under Christian domination, and they achieved this ambition at the beginning of 1492 when their armies took Granada, the Moorish capital, by storm. Wild celebrations followed this victory; the Christian realm of Spain was jubilant at the thought of supplanting once and for all the power of Islam in their land, though it had taken eight hundred to accomplish. Torquemada was quick to take advantage of the popular state of mind by turning the triumphant spirit of the masses against the Jews whom his inhuman cruelty never ceased to pursue. They, he pointed out to the king and queen, were no less harmful to the kingdom than the Moors, nor could their presence amongst Christians fail to work evil, especially in the case of the Marranos who were an easy prey to temptation. Lastly, he argued, these most Catholic rulers could find no better expression of their gratitude to God for their conquest of the Moors, than by ridding Spain of these other infidels as well. The pious couple were so deeply impressed with Torquemada's array of arguments that before leaving Granada they published an edict giving the Jews four months in which to depart from Spain unless they consented to be baptized. (March 31, 1492.) The exiles might take away with them all their property except precious metals and stones which could not, by law, be taken out of the country.

This unforeseen proclamation threw the Jews into great distress, and their most influential men decided to risk carrying a petition to the king, begging him to revoke his order.

There lived in Spain at that time a certain Jewish scholar and dignitary, named Don Isaac Abarbanell (1437-1509), whose family claimed direct descent from King David. His youth had been spent in Lisbon where the Jews enjoyed greater tranquility than in Spain, and there his distinguished theological and secular attainments won him a place of eminence in Jewish as well as in Christian society. A scholar of parts, a philosopher and an admirable theologian, the charm of his personality made him welcome and sought after by all. Alfonso V, the king of Portugal, made him supervisor of the state revenues, but when this king died, Abarbanel's enemies at the court rendered his position there untenable, and he was forced to leave for Spain. When he settled in Castille, the attention of Ferdinand and Isabella was soon drawn to him, for they stood in dire need of a minister of special ability, capable of so increasing the revenues of state that the country might not fall into ruin during the long war with the Moors. Bitter necessity drove the king and queen to disregard the law restricting the appointment of any Jew to public office, and Arbarbanell was made administrator of the ex-

chequer. He continued in this post for eight years and served his masters well; yet not even he, for all his power and influence, was able to avert the crushing blow which the edict of 1492 dealt his fellow-Jews.

No sooner was the order of expulsion made public than he, together with the most respected and noted representatives of Spanish Jewry, hastened to appear before the rulers and implore them with tears to reverse their decision. Unaware of the underlying motive of the edict which was rather a plan to obtain possession of the exiles' wealth than to acquire the favorable notice of heaven, the delegates offered a ransom of thirty thousand ducats in exchange for an act of revocation, and Ferdinand showed a marked disposition to yield. At the crucial moment, however, Torquemada, the Grand Inquisitor, rushed into the audience-chamber holding a crucifix aloft, and crying "Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver. You would sell Him for thirty thousand. Here He is. Take Him and sell Him." With these words he flung the crucifix down before the king and queen and rushed from the palace. This scene made a profound impression, especially upon Isabella, and the offer of the Jewish petitioners was refused irrevocably. At the end of April, heralds were sent out all over the country announcing in the name of the king that the Jews had until

July to settle their affairs and leave the precincts of the kingdom; after which date their presence would render them liable to capital punishment unless they would be baptized into the church.

The persecuted people found themselves faced with a terrible situation. As far back as the time of the Romans, long before Christianity had appeared upon the earth, their ancestors had lived in Spain, and the country had become the beloved homeland of hundreds of thousands of the descendants of those early settlers. The sudden expulsion meant total ruin, for their time was too short to dispose profitably of their possessions. They were forced almost to give away their property; a beautiful house was exchanged for a donkey, a flourishing vineyard for a few yards of cloth. Most of the houses were neither sold or bartered away, but simply left. And all the while, the Dominican monks tried to prey upon the exiles' despair to make them save themselves by deserting their religion. Very few succumbed to these alluring offers; almost the entire Hebrew population preferred to sacrifice all for the sake of their holy faith. On the ninth day of Ab, ever to be remembered as the anniversary day of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem of old, the Jews left Spain. (August 2, 1492.) There were some three hundred thousand, all told, young men and women,

with their children and their old people. Before they left, they paid a last visit to the graves of their forebears which they would never see again, and for three days and three nights they lay prostrate upon that consecrated ground, watering it with their tears. The sight of such heartrending woe made even the Christians weep. Many of the exiles took with them headstones from their family graves for remembrance, or secretly gave them for safe-keeping to Marranos whom they knew and whom, with grief, they were leaving behind in the country of the Inquisition.

The hapless people went blindly wherever their weary feet led them; some took ship for Italy, Turkey and northern Africa. Abarbanell, with some others, sailed for Naples. A large number crossed into Portugal. The long journey was fraught with indescribable suffering; starvation, pestilence and death followed the wanderers into exile.

With the merciless expulsion of three hundred thousand educated and industrious citizens, Spain achieved uniformity of religion within its borders, but at the cost of its decline as a European power. With the Jews there passed out of the kingdom a hardworking and enlightened element which had greatly contributed towards the development of its resources. Militant knights and fanatical monks became masters of

the situation, and in the course of time their activities brought the country to the verge of ruin.

When the Spanish exiles appeared in Portugal, to the number of over a hundred thousand, the king gave them permission to remain there temporarily, but when the term he had set them expired, they were all forced to leave. Young children were taken from their parents and baptized, adults were sold into slavery. A period of persecution lasting over five years ended in the final expulsion of all the Portuguese Jews also (1498). The exiles went to northern Africa, to Italy and to Turkey, as their predecessors from Spain had done. Among the fugitives was Abraham Zacuto, author of the chronicle "Juchasin." Not all of them reached their destination; many perished on the way from hunger, disease and the hardships of travel. Others, crossing the sea, were captured by pirates and sold into slavery. In a few years, all the prosperous Jewish communities of the Pyrenean peninsula had completely disappeared, and the remnants of the Sephardim, as the Jews of Spain and Portugal were called, were scattered over Europe, Asia and Africa.

CHAPTER VI

THE JEWS IN POLAND AND RUSSIA—XIITH-XVTH CENTURY.

§ 32.

The Influx of Jews Into Poland.

THE great mass of Jews fleeing from persecution in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, found refuge in Poland and Lithuania, on the banks of the Vistula and the Niemen. They came in vast numbers from the neighboring country of Bohemia after the havoc wrought amongst them by the earliest crusaders (1098) and the Polish princes welcomed them gladly, for both Jews and Germans enjoyed high repute in the development of industry, trade and commerce. Mechislav the Old (1173) strictly forbade violence directed against the Jews, and appointed certain of them as supervisors of the mint, both in Great and Little Poland. Some of the coins of that period have come down to us, and the names of the princes are engraved upon them in Hebrew characters. At that time there were no men of learning amongst the

Polish Jews, but scholars would be invited from time to time into the country, probably from Germany. The foreigners occupied positions as rabbis, teachers in the elementary schools and cantors in synagogues. On the other hand, Jews from the Slavic countries went abroad to satisfy their eagerness for study and attended foreign schools.

The first Polish ruler to enact special legislation for the security of the Jews was Boleslav of Kalish. In the year 1246, with the consent of his high officials, he published an edict defining the rights of the Jews in Great Poland with the object of protecting them from the tyrannical treatment they suffered at the hands of the Christians. The edict consisted of thirty-seven articles, the first of which was to the effect that in all law-suits, testimony of a Christian witness against a Jew was to be accepted only upon corroboration by another witness, a Jew. The general city courts were debarred from trying Jews, this being reserved for the prince in person, or for judges he specially appointed. A Christian murdering or wounding a Jew was to be tried in the prince's own court. The person and property of a Jew were declared inviolable. Kidnapping of Jewish children for the purpose of converting them to Christianity was punishable by law. The accusation of Jews in the use of Christian blood

for ritual, was prohibited, since a papal edict had declared the untruth of the charge. Should, however, such accusation be brought, it was to be proven by the testimony of six witnesses, three Christian and three Jewish, and if proven, the guilty Jew was to be condemned to death; if not, the Christian informant was to pay the same penalty. All these rights and privileges, the edict proclaimed, were to be granted to the Jews "for all time."

This protection accorded to the Jews by the Polish princes displeased the Catholic clergy who were under instructions from Rome to oppress and humiliate the Jews wherever they could. An ecclesiastical council in Breslau (1266) decided that the proximity of Jews was particularly dangerous to the Christians in Poland where the people had but recently been converted to Catholicism. The council therefore ruled that in all cities, the Jews should live apart from the Christians, in a separate quarter, surrounded by a wall or trench. It was further provided that they should be made to shut themselves inside their houses whenever a religious procession was passing their streets; that they should have no more than one synagogue in each city; that "in order to distinguish them from Christians" they should be made to wear a special headgear, in the form of a horn-shaped hat, and whosoever should be seen in the

street without it, would be liable to punishment according to the customs of the country. Christians were forbidden to eat or drink with Jews, dancing and merrymaking together at weddings or other festivities was also forbidden. Neither might Christians buy meat or other foodstuffs from Jews lest, in some guileful manner, the vendors should seek to poison them. Rulings made by the church in former times were reiterated, viz., forbidding Jews to keep Christian servants, nurses or wet-nurses; and debarring them from office as tax-collectors or holders of any other public charge.

Had these cruel, church-made laws been put into effect, the life of the Polish Jews would have been the hell that their coreligionists in Germany had endured, but fortunately the secular princes of that time, as well as most of the populace, paid no attention to the recommendations of the fanatical priests, and the Jews lived on in peace and friendship with their Christian neighbors.

§ 33.

Casimir the Great—1333-1370.

This king made strenuous efforts to raise the standards of social and political life within his kingdom, and to ameliorate the condition of all classes, even the peasants. By his care for these latter he came to be known as the "peasants'

king" and it was said of him that when he came, Poland was built of wood, and when he went she was built of stone, which meant that many stone structures had been raised where only wooden ones had been before. So just a king as Casimir could not but treat with great consideration his Jewish subjects whom he knew to be most valuable in the development of commerce and industry. In the second year of his reign, Casimir, in Cracow, his capital, ratified the "Charter of Rights" established by Boleslav of Kalish, and declared it effective in all the Polish provinces. Later on he supplemented the edict with new laws whose purpose was to regulate the relations between Jews and other sections of the population in a spirit of justice and mutual benefit. The Jews were authorized to settle in any city or town they chose, to own land and to lease estates from the nobility. Casimir was also careful to preserve the good order and prosperity of the Jewish communities, and with regard to their treatment under the law, local judges had to try cases in which Jews only were concerned with the aid of rabbis and elders of the communities. The process-server was often the attendant of the local "school" or synagogue. This arrangement formed the nucleus of the Kahal self-government, granted when a Jewish community was founded in Lvof (Lemberg), the capital of Red Russia, or Gali-

cia, which province Casimir had annexed to Poland. In 1356 he gave the Jews of Lvof the same right of trial "according to their own laws" as belonged to the Ruthenians, Armenians and Tartars living in those parts.

A legend referred to in the Polish chronicles, explains how Casimir's indulgence towards the Jews was inspired by his love for a beautiful Jewess named Esther. So infatuated did the king become with the lovely face of this tailor's daughter, that he took her to live in his palace near Cracow. She bore Casimir two daughters whom she brought up in the Jewish religion, and two sons, Pelka and Nemir, who were baptized as Christians, and became the progenitors of several distinguished Polish families. Esther was killed in anti-Jewish riots instigated by Ludwig of Hungary, who succeeded Casimir in 1370.

During the reign of this king (1370-1382), a spiritual son of the Catholic West, the Polish Jews saw themselves about to lose all the rights that had been given them by his predecessor. Ludwig even went so far as to threaten to expel them all from his kingdom unless they changed their religion. His reign was not destined to last long, however, and in 1382 his daughter and heiress, Hedwiga, married Yaghello, Prince of Lithuania, who thus became king of the united Polish and Lihtuanian dominions (1386).

The XIVth century saw the transition of

Lithuania from heathenism to Christianity. Jews had been in the country for a great many years, and at the beginning of the XVth century had five communities, in Brest, Grodno, Troky, Lutzk and Vladimir. The grand duke Vitovt, who ruled Lithuania sometimes independently, sometimes as viceroy of his cousin Yaghello, always protected the Jews. In 1388 he published an edict concerning the Jews of Brest and other Lithuanian cities, which closely followed these of Boleslav and Casimir. According to Vitovt's charter, their status was that of free citizens, living under the immediate protection of the grand duke and the higher local authorities. Their communities were independent and self-governing in all matters pertaining to the community life.

The Jews of Lithuania, unlike their western brethren, engaged not only in commerce and industry, but in agriculture as well. The rich Jews would hire from the grand dukes the privilege of collecting the taxes levied on the sale of goods and liquors by the tenants. They also owned and rented landed estates.

§ 34.

The Jews Under the Yaghellons. XVth Century.

King Vladislav Yaghello, founder of the Yaghellone dynasty, was completely under the

domination of the Catholic clergy, whose enmity towards the Jews was fierce and implacable. It was in his reign that superstitious accusations against the Hebrew people first began to spread through Poland. In Posen they were charged with persuading a poor Christian woman to steal three sacramental loaves from the Dominican church which they afterwards cut up and threw into a ditch. The rumor flew abroad that the loaves bled, and that miraculous occurrences were seen near the spot where the sacrilege had been committed. The Bishop of Posen, when the story came to his ears, held the Jews responsible, and condemned the Christian woman, the rabbi of Posen and thirteen Jewish elders, to death at the stake. They were bound to pillars and burned by slow fire (1399).

Under Casimir IV Yaghellon (1447-1492), the Jews were treated less harshly. A great fire broke out in Posen while the king was on a visit there after his coronation, that almost destroyed the city, and the original copy of the first Casimir's edict concerning the Jews was consumed in the flames. A delegation of Jews then appeared before Casimir IV to beg him to restore and ratify their rights as set forth in the lost charter. This request the king willingly granted. "We desire," he said in a new edict, "that the Jews whom we thus take under our special protection on account of the benefit their presence

in our kingdom affords to ourself and our treasury, feel consoled during our reign for all they suffered before."

He confirmed all the rights and privileges they had enjoyed in former years, such as choosing their places of residence and engaging in commercial enterprises, legal autonomy, inviolability of person and property, protection against false accusation and attack. The new edict enraged the ecclesiastical party, and Olesnitzki, archbishop of Cracow, peremptorily ordered the king to revoke it immediately. After a long struggle, Casimir had to submit, and in 1454 many of the rights of the Jews were withdrawn as "contrary to divine (or church) law as well as to the laws of the land."

In the reign of Jan-Albrecht, Casimir IV's successor, a special quarter in the Polish capital was set aside for the residence of the Jews. The restricted area was known as the Ghetto. In the year 1494 the greater part of Cracow was destroyed by fire, and in the general panic, many Jewish homes were plundered by mobs, and the king then ordered all the Jews whose houses were scattered over the city, to remove into a suburb of Cracow called Kasimerzh, and live there in future, apart from the Christian population. In course of time, this suburb became a Jewish town which for several centuries remained detached from the Christian city it

adjoined, the only contact between them being for purposes of commerce.

While the segregation of the Jews was being accomplished in Poland, an era of oppression opened for the persecuted race in Luthuania as well. The grand-duke Alexander, brother of Jan-Albrecht, and his viceroy, published an edict without warning in the year 1495 expelling all Jews from the country. Nobody knows what prompted this cruel action, whether the influence of the clergy who had received news of the expulsion from Spain, or whether the king and his chief officers desired to seize the exiles' houses and estates for themselves. At any rate, all the real estate they had owned in Grodno, Brest, Lutzk and Troky was declared thenceforth to belong to the king, and part of it was distributed amongst various Christian officials. With the permission of Jan-Albrecht, the Lithuanian exiles settled in Polish cities close to the borders of their former country. Alexander, succeeding his brother as King of Poland some years later (1501), gave them leave to return to Lithuania and settle in the places from which he had expelled them. Their houses, estates, synagogues and cemeteries were all restored to them.

By the XVIth century the Jews of Poland had become an indispensable factor in the social and economic life of the country. The govern-

ment realized that if the kingdom served them they, in return, served it equally, being not only useful, but necessary to its welfare. As a commercial, city-dwelling section of the population, they occupied a position between the peasant-farmers and the nobleman land-owners.

§ 34a.

The Jews in Muscovite Russia.

While the number of Jews in Poland constantly increased during the Middle Ages owing to the influx of immigration from the West, the neighboring kingdom of Russia had been almost closed to them.

Tartars had subjugated the country in the XIIIth century, and since then nothing had been heard about the Jewish communities there. Jews and Karaites, descendants of the earliest settlers (see § 5), lived only on the southern borders, on the shores of the Black Sea and in the Crimea. Under the Tartar Khans in the Crimea, they enjoyed considerable freedom, competing in commerce with the Greeks and Genoese, whose model industrial colonies had been established there for many years.

The presence of Jews in Muscovite Russia is not recorded until the second half of the XVth century, when, united under the rule of the Grand Duke Ivan III, that country began to make its way into the family of nations. One

by one Jewish settlers began to appear, coming from the Crimea, from Lithuania and from Western Europe. The name of one of these immigrants is closely associated with an important event in Russian history. In the year 1470, the native chroniclers tell, a Jewish scholar named Scharia came to Novgorod from Kieff, followed by a few of his co-religionists from Lithuania. Scharia became the close friend of certain representatives of the orthodox Christian clergy and converted them to Judaism. Among his converts were two Novgorod priests, Denis and Alexius, and in 1480 these men arrived in Moscow where they converted many orthodox Russians to their adopted religion. The dangerous growth of "Jewish heresy" attracted the alarmed attention of Gennadius, the archbishop of Novgorod, who set on foot the most energetic measures for eradicating it. In Moscow, however, the struggle presented great difficulties, but by perseverance and zeal it was finally exposed and uprooted. A church council held in 1504 issued a ruling which was approved by Ivan III that the chief apostates should be burnt at the stake and the others sent to prisons or monasteries. Thus the "Jewish heresy" came to an end.

This movement coincided with another event in Muscovy. A certain Master Leon, who had come to Moscow from Venice, became court

physician to the Grand Duke Ivan III. Early in 1490 Ivan's eldest son fell dangerously ill and when the father asked Leon whether he would recover, the physician, in an unguarded moment, answered: "I shall not fail to cure your son; if I do you may have me put to death." Soon afterwards the patient died, and at the expiration of the forty days of mourning, Ivan ordered Leon to be beheaded for having allowed his son to die. The execution took place in a square in Moscow in the presence of many onlookers.

Both Scharia, the theologian, and Leon, the physician, were popularly regarded as necromancers, and the "Jewish heresy" had struck such fear into the hearts of the Muscovite grand dukes that it was not until many years later that they would admit any more Jews into their dominions.

MODERN TIMES

§ 35.

Introduction.

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain brought about important changes in the life of the Jewish people, changes closely connected with the great events occurring at the same time in the life of the nations of Europe, and forming the dividing line between the Middle Ages and the Modern Epoch. With the capture of Constantinople in 1453, the Turks destroyed the Byzantine Empire and established Mohametan dominion in the Balkan peninsula and along the Asiatic shore of the Mediterranean. Gutenberg, in Germany, had invented the art of printing, through which all nations received great stimulus in their intellectual development. In the very year of the Jewish expulsion from Spain (1492), Columbus had discovered a new portion of the globe and called it America. Luther proclaimed his Reformation in Germany in 1517 and millions of the Christians of Western Europe renounced their allegiance to the Catholic Church in favor of a creed that carried

them back much nearer to the original religion of Christ.

All these changes profoundly affected the fate of the Jews. Most of the exiles from Spain and Portugal, "Sephardim," as they were called, settled in European and Asiatic Turkey. In the Middle Ages their forefathers had migrated to Spain from the Arab East, and now in the XVIth century they returned from Spain to the Turkish East where lay their ancient homeland, Palestine. Only a few of them stayed behind in Europe, chiefly in Italy and Holland.

Then the "Ashkenasim," or German and Polish Jews, came to the forefront of Jewish history. Though massacres had ceased in Austria and Germany, the Jews were still oppressed there and treated as an inferior caste without any human rights. In Poland, however, where they had settled in vast numbers during the XVIth century, they lived in peace and freedom within their autonomous communities. Poland thus became to the Jews of this period what Babylonia had been in ancient and Spain in mediaeval times, the centre of the spiritual life of the race towards which all outlying sections of the dispersed people naturally gravitated.

CHAPTER VII

The Jews in Turkey and Palestine Up to the Decline of Sabbathism—(1492-1750)

§ 36.

Civil Life. Joseph Nassi.

THE Turkish Empire which supplanted Byzantium arose forty years before the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, this being an act of divine foresight, said the Jewish chroniclers, in order to provide a haven for the children of Israel to be exiled from the West. Many of the homeless Jews did indeed seek shelter in the Turkish dominions where they were welcomed by the sultans who knew the value of their industrious habits and commercial talent. Bayezid II, when he heard of the edict against the Spanish Jews and Arabs, exclaimed: "That Ferdinand of Spain is a foolish king! He has ruined his own country to enrich ours!" The educated Sephardim rendered great service to Turkey where military pursuits occupied all the attention of the upper classes and agriculture was the sole occupation of the lower. The Jews immediately engaged in trades, technical arts and commerce

over land and sea. Through them the Turks were made familiar with the most recent inventions, the use of gunpowder and cannon amongst others, which earned them much favor with the dominant military class. In their commercial activities, Greeks and Armenians were their only rivals.

A great many Jewish communities were founded in European and Asiatic Turkey during the XVIth century. In Constantinople, the capital, there were some 30,000 Jews all told, and forty-four synagogues. This great community was divided into groups according to the localities from which the members had come; the Castilians had their group, the Aragonese theirs, the Portuguese theirs, and so on. The Sephardim, which was the name given to the Spanish and Portguese Jews, differed in language and customs from the Ashkenasim, or German immigrants. Each group had its own synagogue. Other cities of Turkey-in-Europe besides the capital had their Jewish communities, Salonika, Adrianople, etc. The head of all the Turkish Jews was the Chief Rabbi (chacham) whose appointment was ratified by the Sultan, and who, as representative of Jewry, held membership in the State Council of the empire. Educated Jews occupied important positions at the court, some as advisors, others as physicians to the Sultans.

The status of the Turkish Jews was never more secure than during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-66), under whom the empire attained the zenith of its glory and power amongst the kingdoms of Europe. The Jewish dignitaries in important positions at the court used their influence to the benefit of their own people. The most illustrious of these was Joseph Nassi.

Nassi was from Portugal and belonged to a family of wealthy Marranos who had continued to observe their true religion in secret. When the Inquisition began to track them down they fled to the Netherlands and thence to Turkey where they might be free to be Jews openly (1552). In the course of his travels Joseph made the acquaintance of many European statesmen and in contact with them developed his talents as a diplomat. His gifts in this direction were remarked by the Sultan Suleiman who became his close friend, and bestowed upon him the exalted position of advisor and minister of foreign affairs, which he continued to occupy during the reign of Selim II, Suleiman's successor. While unfailingly active in and loyal to the interests of the Turkish government, Joseph Nassi still remembered his fellow-Jews, and used all his considerable influence to help those who were suffering persecution in Christian countries. Suleiman gave him as a gift the

ruined city of Tiberias in Palestine, to rebuild it and use as a settlement for Jews. Selim II conferred upon him the title of Duke of Naxos, Naxos being one of the Cyclade islands in the Archipelago. The Jews called their powerful co-religionist "Nassi," which means "a man of eminence, a great lord."

Joseph Nassi was a munificent patron of Hebrew scholars and writers, of whom a great many had made Constantinople their home. He also supported rabbinical schools. After the death of Selim II, Joseph retired from office and devoted the remaining years of his life to intellectual pursuits, surrounded by the scholars to whom he had thrown open his vast library and collection of manuscripts. He died in 1579. Reina, his widow, founded a printing-house in Constantinople for the printing of books in Hebrew.

§ 37.

Palestine. The Shulhan-Aruch.

Many of the Jewish immigrants to Turkey made their home in Palestine where, ever since the time of the Crusades, Christians and Mohametans had continued to dispute possession of certain districts sacred to the members of both religions. Finally the territory passed into the hands of the Turks, devastated and ruined, yet it was to that very desolation, the precious rem-

nant of their ancient fatherland, that the descendants of the exiled nation of Israel, weary of the persecutions they had suffered in Europe, returned in their thousands at last.

The homeless newcomers could not revive the political conditions their ancestors had enjoyed, but they did succeed in founding a good many communities in the Holy Land to which the Turkish authorities granted certain privileges of self-government and the right to establish religious institutions. In the XVIth century Jewish communities of considerable extent were to be found in Jerusalem, Saphed and Tiberias. Saphed became famous for the Talmudic scholars who lived there. Jacob Berab, the Rabbi (1540), even conceived the plan of establishing in Palestine a high council of rabbis, somewhat after the system of the old Sanhedrin, to decide questions of religion, pass laws and appoint the spiritual leaders of the Jews in all countries. This ambitious project could not, however, be put into effect because the Palestinian communities were too few and too poor.

Then there appeared in Palestine a man who by his single effort, accomplished a task of such difficulty that a whole Sanhedrin would not have been too much to undertake it. This was Joseph Karo (1488-1575), the author of the "Shulhan-Aruch," the famous rabbinical code. A native of Spain, Karo was a young child

when the edict of expulsion sent all the Jews out of the Catholic kingdom. His youth was spent in Turkey in Europe where he lived in Adrianople and other cities. He threw himself ardently into the study of rabbinical literature and displayed extraordinary talent. He devoted twenty years to revising the Jewish laws with supplements and explanations, which great work he completed only after his arrival in Safed where he occupied a position of eminence among the Talmudists of Palestine. Jacob Berab, eldest of the rabbis there, solemnly bestowed upon him the title of "teacher of the law." While in Safed Karo compiled a new code containing all the Jewish laws for popular use. He called it "Shulhan-Aruch" (The Covered Table) and it was printed in Venice in 1565. The work consists of four parts: "Ora-Chaim," laws concerning religious ceremonies for the Sabbath and holidays; "Joredea," laws concerning dietary observances, the slaughter of animals, domestic duties, etc., "Eben-ha-eser," laws concerning family relations, divorce, etc., and "Hoshen-mishpath," the civil and criminal code with the laws of legal procedure. New laws and regulations supplemented every article of the old codes, based on rabbinical commentaries or on popular custom. The "Shulhan-Aruch" stands as the most exhaustive code of Hebrew law, containing as it does many minor laws set down by certain

zealots of more than ordinary austerity and strictness. Karo's contemporaries received this work with amazement at the power of intellect and range of erudition which had created it. By some he was regarded as divinely inspired; rumors were circulated to the effect that an invisible messenger from above (magid) had visited the scholar and revealed to him the mighty truths of the law. The author of the "Shulhan-Aruch" shared the belief of his fellows that he was a being of a superior order. He delved into the mysteries of the Cabala which had just begun to agitate the minds of the Palestinian Jews.

§ 38.

The Cabala. Ari.

In the XVIth century, the Cabala had made perceptible headway among the Jews. The calamities through which they had passed predisposed their minds to a belief in mysteries, and fostered ideas of a hereafter and of the future kingdom ruled over by the Messiah who would come to liberate the Jewish people and be their Savior. The appearance in print of a new and sacred book called the "Zohar," where hitherto it had only been obtainable in manuscript, did much to spread the influence of these mystic doctrines. Sects of hermits arose, preaching repentance and telling of the

kingdom of heaven. They believed that through the Cabala they could learn to become saints and communicate with the realm of celestial spirits. Safed had two famous Cabalists, Moses Cordovero and Elias Vidas. Cordovero proclaimed his doctrine of three degrees of knowledge, the Bible, the Talmud and the Cabala, of which the last was the highest because it revealed to the student the mysteries of God. Vidas' book, "Reshith Hachna" (The Beginning of Wisdom) is filled with stern moral teachings and the portrayal of hell's torments. A group of Cabalists calling themselves "the God-fearing men" met on Fridays in the synagogue at Safed and confessed to one another the sins they had committed during the week. Their leader was an ardent student of the mystic cult namd Isaac Luria Ashkenazi, or Ari, an abbreviation of the words "Ashkenazi Rabbi Isaac."

Ari was born at Jerusalem in 1534 into a family belonging to the Ashkenazi. He had grown up in Egypt where he received his Talmudic training under the Rabbi of Cairo. But Talmudic law did not satisfy this youth's searching mind; the study of the Zohar was more to his liking and to that he devoted all his time, seeking in its teachings the solution of the profoundest problems of religion. He lived the life of a hermit, spending his days in fast-

ing and prayer, and from time to time he would pass into a state of ecstasy in which voices would come to him from heaven and beautiful visions appear. In 1570 Ari arrived in Safed and joined the group of Cabalists there, whose leading spirit he soon became. Surrounded by the other members, he would wander over deserted fields and cemeteries and discuss with them the mysteries of religion. On certain days it was their custom to visit the outskirts of Safed, where, according to the legends, Simon-ben-Jokai, the supposed author of the Zohar, lay buried. On the site of his grave they performed mysterious rites, sang hymns of exaltation, and spoke of the imminence of the "time of miracles," telling how best to prepare to meet the approaching Messiah. Suddenly Ari disappeared, and it was discovered that he had died of a plague at the early age of 38 years (1572). His sudden death came to his followers as a terrible blow; they began to speak of him as a saint. Some even carried their admiration so far as to declare that in his person the "Messiah of the House of Joseph" had appeared, being the forerunner of the great "Messiah of the House of David." Haim Vital, one of Ari's most intimate friends and disciples and the son of a copyist of holy books, became the chief exponent of the leader's mystic doctrines. He wrote down the teachings Ari had preached

and attributed to him many of his own ideas. The following is a resumé of their combined doctrine, collected under the title of the "Practical Cabala":

Man, as a consequence of his original sin, strayed from his divine source, from the world of pure spirits, and sank into an abyss filled with forces of evil. It is then the task of every true believer to free his own soul from the dominion of those forces and bind it once more to its lost divinity by means of fasting and prayer.

The purification of the soul after death is accomplished through "wanderings" or reincarnations (gilgul), by which the soul of a sinner enters another man's body in which it has opportunity to reform, but if it fails to do so it must again pass after death into yet another man's body, and so on until it is completely purged of evil. Instances are cited of human souls entering the bodies of animals and suffering unspeakable torment. An intimate tie binds man close to the higher spirits; every action, every work he utters, has its repercussion in the world beyond. Great disturbances occur in heaven according to how some man prays or performs certain religious rites. It is even possible to "summon" the Messiah, that is, to hasten his coming by means of fasting, repentance and atonement for sin. At all costs it is important

never to cease to mourn the destruction of the Jewish kingdom, of Jerusalem and of the temple. The advent of the Savior must be passionately desired at all times and expected from day to day.

All these commandments and beliefs contained in the "Practical Cabala" found a ready response in the hearts and minds of the people, and ultimately created the Messianic movement which in the seventeenth century overspread the entire Jewish world.

§ 39.

Sabbatai Zevi.

All the Jews in Turkey, and those of Palestine in particular, fell ever more completely under the influence of the Cabalists with their ceaseless assurance of the imminent coming of the Messiah. Rumors of the early restoration of the Jewish kingdom in the Holy Land travelled to the communities abroad, and filled the thoughts of Jews in Asia and Western Europe with speculations as to the date of the advent. Some vague hint in the "Zohar" was construed to set the date for 1648 and in that year a man actually did appear in Turkey, calling himself the liberator of the Jewish people. His name was Sabbatai Zevi.

Sabbatai-Zevi (Shabsi-Zvi) was born in the Turkish city of Smyrna on the fast-day of the ninth Ab, 1626. His father was a merchant of Sephardic descent. Sabbatai was very handsome and possessed besides a beautiful and melodious voice. His extraordinary talents enabled him to master the whole of the Talmud and the Cabala at a very early age, thereby attaining the educational equipment considered necessary for every Jew at that time. His Talmudic mentor was the celebrated rabbi of Smyrna, Joseph Yskafa, and on the side of the Cabala he was a follower of the ascetic Ari. A born dreamer, Sabbatai shunned the society of friends and fellow-students and lived in almost complete solitude. In conformity with the Eastern custom, he married very young, but married life did not please him, so that he soon divorced his wife. The farther he pursued the mysteries of the "Zohar" and the Arianic Cabala, the more powerfully he was impelled to assume the burden of redeeming the sins of all his people and thereby hasten the Messiah's advent, as the Cabalist doctrine promised. Sabbatai spent his days in prayer and fasting which resulted in his becoming subject to fits of religious delirium, and while in these trances, when the dividing line between the real and the fancied disappears, it was easy to persuade himself that he was the man destined to be the very Messiah for whom

the world was waiting. This belief in his high destiny was apparent in his attitude towards his fellow-students who fell willingly under the influence of the young hermit's enthusiasm as he initiated them into the secrets of the Cabala. He was but twenty years old when a group of young visionaries and mystics accepted him as their leader. With the dawn of the year 1648 indicated in the Zohar as the date of the Messiah's advent, Sabbatai decided to reveal himself to the people of Smyrna. The day came when he uttered in the synagogue before the assembled congregation, the full name of God, Jehovah, instead of the customary "Adonai." This word, according to tradition, might be spoken by none but the High Priest of the ancient temple of Jerusalem himself. Sabbatai's action was intended to convey that the restoration of the temple was at hand.

As soon as the rabbis of Smyrna heard of the claims Sabbatai was putting forward, they excommunicated the self-styled Messiah together with his followers. Even his old teacher, Joseph Yskafa, joined in the condemnation. Sabbatai was forced to leave his city but this only increased his renown (1651). His followers talked of him as the "suffering Messiah" while he went from one city to another throughout Turkey preaching his doctrines. He gathered many new adherents in Constantinople, Jerusalem,

Cairo and Salonika. In the Egyptian capital the attention of the populace was drawn to him by the following incident:

A tale was abroad concerning a young Polish woman named Sarah who had been kidnapped as a child and placed in a Christian monastery. From there she had succeeded in escaping to Holland where she had returned to her original faith. She was often heard to declare that she was destined to become the wife of the Jewish Messiah, and when her story reached the ears of Sabbatai he too said that the marriage had been decreed on high. His messengers were despatched to Europe and the beautiful Sarah returned with them to Cairo, where her union with Sabbatai was consummated with solemn ceremonies.

Those wonderful adventures filled the hearts of the Jews with amazement and hope. The curse of the "herem" laid upon Sabbatai was forgotten and when, after long wanderings, he returned to Smyrna whence in his youth he had been expelled, he was met with acclamation and rejoicing, the people shouting "Long Live our king, our Messiah!" (1656). He gained new followers every day; self-styled prophets appeared who spread tales of the "holy mission" of the Redeemer from Smyrna, and of the approaching "time of miracles." One of the most zealous of these prophets was Nathan of Gaza,

a native of Palestine. He sent out his "prophetic revelations" to all the Jewish communities, declaring that the Messiah from Smyrna was soon to tear the crown from the Sultan's head, after which, by means of miracles and marvellous exploits, he would lead all the Jews back to Jerusalem. Sabbatai's name was soon famous throughout Europe, especially in Italy, Germany and Holland. It was commonly believed that Jewry stood at the threshold of great events. A sort of spiritual abandon possessed the people; some, when they met, would sing and dance together, others made long fasts and prayed continually, making public confession of their sins. All, according to their fashion, were actively preparing to meet their Savior. Special prayers for Sabbatai Zevi were offered up in the synagogues. Even the Christians spoke and wrote a great deal about the new Jewish Messiah, connecting his advent with certain ancient theological discourses predicting a world-upheaval in the year 1666, according to calculations based on the Apocalypse. In vain the most honored of the rabbis inveighed against the people's credulity, warning them not to be deceived; no one paid any heed to them. All eyes were turned towards the East where great events, miracles and omens were hourly expected to occur.

§ 40.

The Messianic Movement and Its Fall.

The year 1666 when, according to the predictions of Sabbatai and his prophets, the final change was to be made manifest, dawned at last. In this year it was expected that the new Messiah would enter the Turkish capital and acquaint the sultan with his power. Sabbatai Zevi did in fact set out for Stamboul, escorted by a guard of honor, but the Turkish government had heard of the unrest his "mission" had been causing amongst the Jews and had taken due precautions for his reception. The moment he arrived with his body-guard in the capital, Sabbatai was arrested by order of the authorities and imprisoned (February, 1666). Two months later the prisoner and his disciples were sent by the Grand Vizier's command to the castle of Abydos, near Stamboul, where they remained.

The imprisonment of the Messiah, so far from undermining the people's faith in him, strengthened it greatly. They gave full credence to the idea that the redeemer of Israel was passing through the period of supreme suffering which, according to the ancient legend, must precede the sublime act of liberation. Enthusiastic adherents flocked to Stamboul from every land in the hope of seeing the new Messiah and hearing from his own lips the glad tidings of deliver-

ance. Many brought with them rich gifts, and gold and jewels wherewith to mitigate the Messiah's sufferings by satisfying his creature needs. Sabbatai lived at Abydos like a prince in his castle; by bribing the Turkish guards, all visitors and messengers could gain admittance to his presecence. His prison became known to his followers as the "Migdal-oz," the Castle of Power. From there he sent his decrees abroad to all Jewry the world over. He ordered that the fast on the ninth day of Ab, which had been established in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem, be changed to a festival of rejoicing in honor of its coming restoration and of the birthday of the new Messiah, who was to rebuild it.

Among the delegations that came to Sabbatai from Europe was one from Poland. Nehemiah Cohen, a member of this party, mistrusted Sabbatai and desired to put his honesty to the test. Several personal conversations with the Messiah led this doubting Polish Jew to the conviction that Sabbatai was only trying to deceive the people. Firm in this belief, Nehemiah left Abydos and reported to the Turkish authorities everything that was taking place at the castle. The matter was referred to the sultan, Mahomet IV, who was so incensed at Sabbatai's conduct that he was ready to have the Messiah executed as a rebel on the spot. Upon his arrival

at the Turkish court, a friendly courtier advised him to go over to Islam if he would save his life and appease the sultan's fury. The pseudo-Messiah decided to take the fatal step; he entered the presence of Mahomet IV with a turban on his head in token of his conversion. His wife and a few of his disciples followed his example. Then the "Messiah" who had renounced his faith was made a doorkeeper of the royal palace in Adrianople and given the name of Mahomet-Effendi (August, 1666).

Notwithstanding his act of apostasy, Sabbatai continued to mislead his followers. To the Turks he said that he was using all his influence to convert the Jews to Islam, and to the Jews he declared that his adoption of the alien religion was a mere pretence, a means of attracting the Turks to Judaism and accomplishing the glorious feat of redeeming the people of another creed. The simple enthusiasts who were his followers accepted all the ridiculous tales that were circulated in Sabbatai's name. Some voluntarily went over to Mohametanism in order to join the Master in his great task of redemption. Others believed that it was not Sabbatai himself but his ghost who became converted to Islam, remaining in the world in the person of Mahomet-Effendi; as for the Messiah, he had ascended to Heaven and would again appear when the hour of freedom would strike.

Tales of this kind were spread all over the Jewish world by Nathan of Gaza and other prophets, and for many years the mass of Jews continued to believe in the divine mission of Sabbatai, the Messiah.

The hero of the movement, himself, was behaving very strangely in Adrianople. Now he would pretend to be a very devout Moslem, now he would conduct the services of Israel with song and dancing. The suspicion of the Turkish government were once more aroused. At last they banished him to Dulcigno, an obscure little town in Albania where none of his followers were allowed to see him. There the false Messiah died in 1676, forsaken and alone.

The death of Sabbatai Zevi had a sobering effect on most of his followers, both in Asia and Europe. Many recanted and did penance for their ill-considered change of faith. The rabbis redoubled their efforts to keep the returned heretics within the fold and exercised the utmost vigilance in routing out all the followers of the false Messiah from the midst of the community.

Some nevertheless remained faithful to Sabbatai, clinging in their credulity to their belief in his divine mission. They were convinced that the Messiah who had ascended to heaven would soon return to earth again and accomplish the deliverance of the Jewish nation. Later on a

sect of "Sabbatians" was founded in Turkey, under the leadership of Jacob Zevi, the "Messiah's" brother-in-law. Salonika, the home of Sabbatai's kinsfolk, was their headquarters. The members of this sect evolved the strangest ideas of faith and morality. According to the leaders, there were two Gods, one the Creator of the world, and the other the God of Israel. It was the latter who had descended to earth in the person of Sabbatai Zevi. Further, they taught that no moral laws were binding upon men and that "at the end of time" everybody might sin as much as he pleased. All kinds of depravity was therefore indulged in freely by the Sabbatians; indeed their behavior became so notorious that the attention of the Turkish authorities was finally attracted to them and they found hemselves faced with persecution by the state officials. The late Messiah, having shown them the way out of difficulties such as this, they followed his example and adopted the religion of Mahomet. Islam received them, four hundred strong (1687). Jacob Zevi and the other leaders covered the sect's apostasy with assurances of its occult significance. After Jacob's death his son Berachiah became head of the Sabbatians of Salonika (1695-1740) and under him the sect degenerated steadily. While observing all the Mohametan ceremonies in public, they persisted in their Sabbatian faith

and still believed their founder to have been the incarnation of God. This sect existed in Salonika for a great many years, and a remnant of it is still to be found under the Turkish name of "donme," the apostates.

CHAPTER VIII

The Jews in Western Europe from the XVIth to the XVIIth Century.

§ 41.

Italy.

A LARGE proportion of the Jewish exiles from Spain made their way to Italy where they felt assured of being able to live in comparative peace. The leader of this migration was Isaac Abarbarnel, the last of the great leaders of the Spanish Jews.

Abarbanel first settled in Naples, but afterwards went to Venice. In Naples he held for some time an administrative post at the royal court, which, however, he resigned in order to devote himself wholly to study. He had written an exhaustive commentary on the Bible, and a number of other works on the fundamental principles of Judaism. The profound grief with which he considered the disastrous career of his people, led him to consecrate his most ardent efforts to the fathoming of the Messianic dogma. By reference to ancient legends and the pro-

phets' predictions he tried to calculate the time of the Messiah's due advent, which he believed to have become imminent. The aged and illustrious sage, as he felt his life moving towards its term, rejoiced in the conviction that the hour of deliverance was at hand for all his race. Abarbanel died in Venice in the year 1509.

He had not been long dead when his calculation seemed to have justified itself, for in 1524 a mysterious stranger appeared in Venice, having come from the East, no one knew whither. It was impossible to tell whether he was a real visionary or merely an impostor; at any rate, he said his name was David, and claimed to be of the tribe of Reuben (Reubeni). According to his story, he was from the distant land of Arabia where a Jewish kingdom existed, populated by desecendants of the ancient shepherd tribes of Israel, the Reubenites and Gadites. The king of that far country was his own brother, and he, David, had been sent into Europe as the bearer of messages of great moment to the monarchs of Christendom. He entered Rome riding on a white horse, and went straight to the palace of Pope Clement VII, who received him in audience for a considerable time. From Italy, David Reubeni proceeded to Portugal where, as in Rome, he was welcomed by King John III with the honors due to the representative of a fellow-ruler. This mysterious embassy created

a conviction amongst the Jews that great events were afoot. It was rumored that David had come to Europe on behalf of the Arabian Israelites to arrange for the supply of firearms for their projected war against Turkey, the object of which was to regain possession of the Holy Land.

The utmost excitement reigned in the clandestine Jewry of Spain and Portugal, that is, among the Marranos upon whom the Inquisition had inflicted such intolerable suffering. Solomon Molcho, one of the Marranos of Lisbon, followed the self-styled Jewish Envoy in his visits from place to place. This Molcho was a passionate Cabalist and like many of his contemporaries, indulged dreams of the imminent coming of the Messiah. Carried away visions of the Jews' early deliverance, he left Portugal and went to Turkey and Palestine where he joined the Cabalists of those parts and spoke everywhere he went of the approaching advent. On his return to Europe, he began secret negotiations with the Pope, and shortly afterwards achieved a bold exploit that astounded Europe. With David Reubeni he gained an audience of the German emperor Charles V at Regensburg, and laid before him a plan to mobilize the European Jews for the Turkish war. This enterprise, however, ended badly when the Emperor had both of them arrested and taken to

Italy in his train. Molcho, as an apostate from Christianity, was condemned to death by the Inquisition and burned at the stake in Mantua (1532). As for Reubeni, he was imprisoned in Spain and remained there until his death several years later.

Thus the hopes of the Jews suffered cruel disappointment. Their condition in Italy was changing for the worse. The Popes had begun to oppress them in the Papal States, and all Innocent III's humiliating laws against them were restored and enforced. City Jews were segregated in ghettos and made to wear the distinguishing badge whenever they appeared on the streets. They were allowed to have no more than one synagogue in each town, and Talmudic study was again banned. The invention of printing had brought about a vast increase in this branch of learning. The first complete edition of the Talmud was printed in Venice about 1520. The enemies of the Jews revived the old charge of insults to Christianity contained in various passages of the work, and the Inquisition ordered all copies of it to be burnt. The houses of the Roman Jews were searched and all the volumes confiscated on the day of Rosh-Hashona, 1553. In other Italian cities the same thing was happening. After this outbreak of anti-Talmudic enthusiasm, however, the Catholic clergy revoked their ban and al-

lowed the Talmud to be reprinted on condition that all derogatory allusions to Christianity be omitted. Most of the censors appointed were converted Jews, who exercised great diligence in cutting out the objectionable passages.

Few of the Popes equalled the fanatical Paul IV in hostility towards the Jews. He published two bulls enacting a whole system of anti-Hebrew laws applicable to the Jews in Rome and throughout the Papal dominions. In their cruel and humiliating character they were very much like the laws that had been in vogue during the Middle Ages. They provided for the isolation of the Jewish residents in all cities and for the wearing of the distinguishing badge. No Christian might take employment in Jewish homes as servants or nurses to children; they were forbidden to be present at any Jewish feast or to allow themselves to be treated by Jewish physicians, or even to address a Jew as "master," whoever he might be. The ghetto-dwellers were allowed to engaged in petty trade only, and this usually took the form of dealing in old clothes; the lending of money at low rates of interest was also not denied them. They might acquire no real estate of any kind. The ruthless and insulting laws contained in these bulls of 1555 drove the Jews to the brink of humiliation and financial ruin.

The second half of the XVIth century saw

the Jews of Rome and other Italian cities in the same state of defencelessness as that in which the German Jews had been sunk before them. The Roman ghetto was on one bank of the Tiber, so low-lying that when the river rose, the ground was completely under water. A wall with many gates cut off the ghetto from the rest of the city; special guards were set to watch the gates at night, so that none of the Jews might leave once they had been locked in at the appointed hour. According to one visitor to Rome in 1724, the Jewish quarter consisted of only two long and six short streets, and there some three thousand families, or twenty thousand persons lived in terrible congestion. Most of the Jews were occupied in some form of small trade or handicrafts. The ghetto streets were lined with shops, large and small, where all manner of merchandise, from foodstuffs to old clothes were sold. The trade in old clothes was raised by the Roman authorities to the status of a "privileged" occupation for this ancient race, and the promotion carried with it the right to penetrate into the Christian city for the purchase of cast-off garments, as also have storehouses outside the ghetto. Of the handicrafts, tailoring was most generally followed. "All through the summer," says a chronicler of that time, "hundreds of tailors are to be seen at work on the streets, near the doorsteps of their homes.

The women are beside them, making buttonholes and buttons; so skilful are they that they are employed in this work by tailors of other nationalities from every part of the city. Roughly speaking, three-fourths of the Jewish craftsmen are tailors, and the rest work at various other skilled trades."

The special garb was compulsory for all Jews, irrespective of sex, age or class. The men wore yellow caps and the women, a yellow scarf, cut to a certain width, over their heads. In course of time, the yellow headgear was changed to orange, and then to red, so that finally the "barretts," as these caps were called, looked almost like the red hats worn by the cardinals. This modification resulted in another order which enforced the use of yellow only, so as to preevnt trouble on this score.

These indignities were put upon the Jews with the single object of making them renounce their religion for Christianity. The so-called "compulsory" sermons were arranged for the same purpose, the Jews being forced to sit in churches and listen to the sermons of the priests. This they had to do every Saturday afternoon, when police guards came to the ghetto and drove them in crowds, men, women and children over twelve years of age, into the churches. "At two o'clock precisely," relates an eyewitness (1724), "they were made to appear in church.

The large wooden crucifix hung on the wall was covered with a sack in order that they might not jeer at it. The men and women sat on separate benches, separated from each other by a curtain as in their synagogues. A priest occupied the pulpit which was raised well above the ground. In a loud voice he would begin his sermon, using so many Hebrew words that he could easily be mistaken for a Jew himself, and the discourse followed this method: first he praised the Jews as God's chosen people; then change completely, reviling them for their stubbornness, and heaping scorn upon them, for refusing to heed his teaching. The sermon usually lasted two hours, during which time nobody might move, nor say a word nor fall asleep. Supervisors watched the listeners all the time, and severely punished any failure to obey."

From time to time the agents of the Papal police took some Jew by force to the "house of new converts" in order to prepare him for baptism. These prisoners were ordinarily detained for forty days spent by their captors in persuading them to change their religion. Some would submit, but those who persisted in remaining adamant were driven back to their ghetto.

§ 42.

Science and Letters in Italy.

In spite of their deplorable civil condition, the Italian Jews reached a high plane of intellectual development during the XVIth and XVIIth centuries. It seemed as though they had fallen temporary heirs to the culture of the Spanish exiles. The lists of their distinguished men included famous Talmudists, preachers, Cabalists, philologists, historians and philosophers. In the XVIIth century Italian Jewry gave two creative thinkers to the world, Jehuda-de-Modena and Joseph Delmedigo.

Jehuda-De-Mondena (1571-1648) occupied the position of Chief Rabbi of Venice, but in his heart he entertained grave doubts as to the truth of both rabbinical and cabalistic doctrines. Of his many books, two stand out as more remarkable than the rest; one, a refutation of the rabbinical laws (Shaagath Ari), and the other (Ari Nohem) a protest against the Cabala, whose sacred books the author declares to be spurious. Being afraid to publish these works during his lifetime, De Modena left them in manuscript form, and it was not until much later that they were brought to light.

Joseph Delmedigo (died in 1655), a native of the island of Crete, was a writer of another kind. Few men of his time had received a wider

or a more exhaustive education; he was familiar with most ancient and modern languages, and at the University of Padua, where he was a student, he learnt mathematics and astronomy at the feet of the immortal Galileo. His studies in physical and medical science did not, however, prevent his being attracted to the Cabalistic school of thought.

His passion for knowledge went hand in hand with a passion equally great for travel. He visited many parts of Europe and Asia, and made his home alternately in Poland and Lithuania until his middle age, when he went from Amsterdam, Hamburg and Frankfurt to Prague where he engaged in the practice of medicine. In a large volume called "Elim," Delmedigo expounded the knowledge he had acquired in all branches of secular learning. His lesser works are devoted to the "secret learning" or the Cabala. (Matzref-Le Hoch, etc.)

Even the women were active in literature during this productive period of the Italian Jews. The two poetesses, Debora Ascarelli and Sara Sullam, wrote in Italian. The former, wife of a highly-respected Roman Jew, translated some of the Hebrew hymns into lovely Italian verse, and Sara Sullam, daughter of a Venetian merchant, was one of the most cultured women of her day. A Genoese priest tried for a long time to convert this gifted poetess to his own

faith, but in vain. He then asked her permission at least to pray for her conversion, and this she granted on condition that he, in his turn, allow her to pray that he might be converted to Judaism. Sara Sullam died in 1641. Of all her works none are known but a few sonnets and a book on the immortality of the soul.

At the beginning of the XVIIIth century a gifted young writer became known in Italy. The name of this forerunner of the renaissance of Jewish poetry was Moses-Haim Luzzato of Padua (1707-47). From his early youth Luzzato had shown extraordinary talent as poet and stylist. At the age of twenty, he had already written "Migdal Oz" (A Strong Tower), an idyll in pure Biblical Hebrew verse, setting forth the triumph of sacred over profane love. This work was rare in contemporary Hebrew literature where hitherto the poets had found their inspiration only within the walls of the synagogue, and had expressed that inspiration only in psalms of sorrow or in hymns. Had Luzzato continued along the path he first pursued, he would most likely have achieved the reform of Hebrew poetry; as it was, he allowed himself to be swept away by his enthusiasm for the Cabala, and the mystical philosophy of the Cabalists, and the course of his life was diverted from its original channels. He studied the

"Zohar" and Ari's commentary thereon, and then began to write in that same bizarre and cryptic manner, though so skilfully, it must be said, that he was even moved to call his Cabalistic works the "second Zohar." In his passion for the "secret wisdom," Luzzato went out of his depth. He came to believe that he wrote at divine dictation, received through an intangible messenger in the form of an angel or "magid."

In 1729, Luzzato confided to a few fellow-students of the Cabala, these ideas which so profoundly affected him, and they conceived an ordinate admiration for him accordingly. In letters to their friends they hinted that a young Cabalist in Padua was about to reveal new truths to the world, and that very soon. This took place at a time when the rabbis were everywhere conducting a desperate campaign against the secret Sabbathian sects, and publicly cursing them in the synagogues. Their attention being now drawn to Luzzato's activities, they proceeded to persecute him with the other Sabbatian heretics of whom they believed him to be one. Their first action was to extract a promise from him under oath to cease writing on the Cabala, but he broke his word. Thereupon the Venetian rabbis invoked the "Herem" against him and his books, that is, excommunicated him from the synagogue and forbade the reading of his works. As an excommunicate, Luzzato could

not remain in Italy, and for a long while he drifted from place to place throughout Germany and Holland. It was in Amsterdam that he produced his masterpiece, a philosophical drama called "The Glory of the Righteous" (La-iesharim-Tehila), and a series of works on the Cabala and ethical subjects. Luzzato's powerful impulse towards mysticism and Messianism, filled him with longing to see the Holy Land. He therefore journeyed to Palestine, but died there of a plague at the early age of forty years. He was buried in Tiberias.

Luzzato's place in Hebrew literature was at a cross-roads; as Cabalist he belonged to the past, as poet to the future, for his verse anticipated the tendencies which came to their full development during the XIXth century.

§ 43.

The Netherlands.—Acosta and Spinoza.

The scope of international commerce increased immensely with the discovery of America, and the main current of trade between the Old World and the New flowed through the two greatest maritime countries of Europe, England and the Netherlands. The free-spirited and energetic peoples of both these countries had rid themselves of the Catholic yoke in the XVIth century, and adopted the creed of Protestants.

In Holland religious emancipation but shortly preceded political, and a heroic, long-drawn struggle against Spain ended with the defeat of the cruel king Philip II, crowned inquisitor and grandson of Ferdinand the Catholic. The Netherlands became a free republic in 1579, and immediately all the persecuted came flocking to its shores from Spain and Portugal. Many descendants of the Marranos were among the immigrants, fleeing from the dangers and hardships that attended their secret observance of Judaism. They surged into Holland by the thousand, able for the first time, to be Jews outwardly as well as in their hearts. Most of them were merchants of wealth, physicians, ex-officials and military officers. A large community soon gathered in Amsterdam, and smaller groups in other cities of the Netherlands followed their lead. The founder of the Jewish community in Amsterdam was a Portuguese Marrano, Jacob Tirado. In 1593 Tirado, accompanied by a few Marrano families, arrived in the town, and professed their religion in public. They chose a rabbi and soon had built a synagogue which they called Beth-Jacob (Jacob's House). Twenty years later the Jewish population of Amsterdam had grown to several thousands, and was rapidly increasing. The immigrants were granted communal self-government, and a council of elders (maamad)

consisting of both secular and ecclesiastical members were in charge of their lay affairs; religious questions were decided by rabbis or "chachams" alone. The council of elders shared with the rabbis the right to penalize free-thinkers or refractory members of the communities as they saw fit.

In the Netherlands, as in every other country where the Jews were allowed to live in peace and liberty, a number of gifted men rose to eminence in various branches of literature and science. There were poets and prose-writers who used the Hebrew, Latin, Spanish or Portuguese languages, and poetry and the Cabala, owing to their emotional and imaginative appeal, find a high place in Dutch-Jewish literature. Nor did they lack philosophers whose chief concern it was to inject the principles of free thought into their theology. So far indeed did some of these thinkers go in their independence, that they incurred the displeasure of the orthodox rabbis who began to persecute them.

One of these free-thinkers was Uriel Acosta, an erstwhile Marrano, born in Portugal in 1590. He had been brought up a Catholic from childhood, and studied law in his youth at the age of twenty-five he was treasurer of a church. But his searching intellect found no satisfaction in the dogmas of Catholicism, so he took up the

study of Biblical literature. Immediately he was seized with an ardent desire to return to the faith of his forefathers. He left Portugal secretly, and went to Amsterdam where he settled with his mother and brothers, living openly as a Jew. But even Judaism failed to satisfy him, so opposed was his freedom-loving mind to the multitude of external ceremonies and rites established by the Talmudists and observed with the greatest fidelity by the Jews. He was unwilling to submit to these irksome regulations, and publicly criticized the doctrines of the "Pharisees," as he called the rabbis. This brought its natural result; the heretic was excommunicated from the synagogue until he should reform. Uriel did not reform; on the contrary, he went deeper into his evil courses. He wrote a book in Portuguese called "A Survey of the Legends of the Pharisees," in which he exposed the falsehood not only of the Talmudic legends, but of the Bible as well. (1624.) This exploit caused all the Jews to shun Acosta as a dangerous heretic, and for several years he lived in isolation and disgrace. He could not, however, endure this state of ostracism forever, so at last he decided to recant in public, and in the presence of the rabbis. Great solemnity dignified the event. Acosta entered the synagogue where the rabbis and a large congregation were already assembled, and in a loud voice read the formula

of repentance, renouncing his views which he declared contrary to the creed of Israel. Then, following the order of the rites of recantation, he received thirty-nine lashes of a whip upon his back, and finally prostrated himself on the threshold of the synagogue, and all the congregation stepped out over his body. These humiliations completely unhinged the mind of the unhappy heretic; shortly afterwards, in a fit of despairing anger, he committed suicide by blowing out his brains. (1640.) He left his autobiography, written in Latin, entitled "Exemplar Humanæ Vitæ," (An Example of a Human Life).

Another free-thinker, Baruch, or Benedict, Spinoza, stood his ground with far greater firmness than Acosta. The greatest philosopher Jewry ever produced, Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in 1632. His earliest education he received under the rabbis and scholars of Amsterdam, in a Talmud-Torah where the studies were divided over seven grades. The gifted youth followed the rabbinical teaching first with the study of mediæval Hebraic philosophy in the works of Ibn-Ezra, Maimonides and Krescas, and afterwards with general secular branches of learning. Descartes' system of philosophy was just then attracting a great deal of notice, and Spinoza was profoundly impressed with the idea of the elevation of free human reason above the blind

belief in religious dogma and legend. From the reason, he held, all knowledge sprang, and in accordance with this principle, his mode of living underwent a complete change, passing out of the range of rabbinical direction. Having decided to live as his reason alone dictated, he went no more to the synagogue and ceased to observe any of the rites of his religion, considering them unnecessary. The rabbis did all they could to bring him back to the path of right-thinking, but when they had proven their efforts fruitless, they excommunicated him. (1656.)

Thereupon Spinoza left Amsterdam, whither he returned only on rare occasions. He spent the rest of his life at the Hague, where he lived the life of a recluse, emerging from his philosophical studies only for a few hours each day, during which he plied the trade that provided him with his frugal livelihood. He was a grinder of lenses.

In 1670 he published a politico-theological treatise in Latin, the "Tractatus theologico-politicus," which filled the clergy of all creeds with the greatest alarm. It was the first unbiased examination of the Biblical dogmas as the foundation of theologies. The "Ethics" and other works contain the exposition of Spinoza's doctrines in general philosophy, whereby he shows the Deity and Universe as one indivisible whole. This philosophy, known as Pantheism, made its author's name famous throughout the world.

Amongst Christians and Jews alike, it was acclaimed and condemned with equal ardor.

The Jewish thinkers of that epoch, could not, however, subscribe to the teachings of an excommunicate. Their religion had cost them too much suffering for them to be ready to change it for any system of mere philosophical reasoning, however persuasive. Spinoza, so far as these fellow-Jews were concerned, remained an outcast until the day of his death. (1677.)

§ 44.

Manasseh-ben-Israel, and the Return of the Jews to England.

The place of highest eminence among the rabbis and writers of the Netherlands Jewry in the XVIIth century, belonged to Manasseh-ben-Israel. He was born into a Marrano family in Lisbon, in 1604. For a long time his father languished in a Portuguese prison, the Inquisition having discovered him observing the rites of Judaism in secret. At last he managed to escape with his family to Amsterdam, where they might live openly as Jews, and there the young Manasseh received a many-sided education. His profound knowledge of the literature of his own race was equalled by his familiarity with the literatures of Europe which he knew in ten languages. He was the intimate friend of some of the most famous Christian scholars

of his day, and for some time carried on a correspondence with a royal savante, Christina, princess of Sweden. He owed his reputation to his literary works, some of which were in Latin, some in Spanish and some in Hebrew. The most celebrated of these is his "Breath of Life," (Nishmath Haim) written in the latter tongue in 1652. It is a medly of philosophy and the Cabala. No such universal attention was drawn to any of his writings as to the treatise in English "In Defense of the Jews." It was an attempt to refute the superstitious mediæval accusations against the Jewish people, and did great service to the Jews who lived in that country from which mediæval prejudice had once expelled them.

Some three hundred and fifty years had elapsed since the English Jews had been expelled, (1921), during which period the life of the English nation had changed very considerably. Most of the population had renounced Catholicism and become Protestants; the sect of "Puritans" had arisen, all of whose members read diligently in the Old Testament which they accepted as the basis of the true religion. This devotion to the Bible formed a bond between the English Protestants and the Jews, and created a feeling that a movement to revoke the order of expulsion would be an act of justice greatly to be desired.

Cromwell was at that time head of the state (1649-58), and he was an ardent devotee and student of the Bible. A group of Jewish merchants living in Amsterdam thought the auspicious moment had arrived when they might petition Cromwell for the rehabilitation of their people in England. Manasseh-ben-Israel was chosen envoy, and they gave him full power to conduct the negotiations. Following an exchange of letters with the Protector, he set out for London in the autumn of 1655. The address he presented on behalf of the "Jewish nation," begged Cromwell to admit them into the country once more and to grant them freedom of religion, and occupation, and communal self-government. A commission consisting of ecclesiastics and laymen was appointed to consider the petition.

This event aroused much excitement in English society, and a number of authors published their attempts to revive the anti-Jewish temper of the Middle Ages. Manasseh-ben-Israel's contribution to the literature of the subject was the above-mentioned work, which made a deep impression upon the people.

The government was in no hurry to decide the issue, but refrained from molesting such Jews as had already settled in London. Soon the capital became the seat of a community of considerable size, most of the members being

Sephardim from Holland. Later on, Jews settled, undisturbed, in all the cities of England. Manassah did not live to see his labors bear fruit, for he died on his homeward journey to Holland. (1657.)

§ 45.

Germany. The Reformation and the Jews.

The great religious movement known as the Reformation which, as it were, revived the youth of many European nations, had its origin in Germany. There it was that the first voices were raised in protest against the oppression of the Catholic church and the arbitrary power of the Pope. The leader of these "Protestants" as they were called, was the famous Martin Luther (1517).

The prelude to his crusade against the existing ecclesiastical order, was the beginning of conflict between the ignorant Dominican friars and the enlightened members of the "humanist" party, whose chief representative was Johann Reuchlin. This scholar was perfectly famiilar with the Hebrew language which he had learned from Jewish teachers, and his study of the literature of Israel inspired him with a deep sense of friendship towards the Jewish race. He became their ardent protector against the cruel persecutions of the Catholic clergy. The latter, seeking to do harm to the cause of both the Jews

and the Humanist students of Hebrew letters, employed a converted Jew, an ex-butcher named Pfefferkorn, to lend his name to a charge of blasphemy and immorality against the Talmud. The apostate, together with his Dominican masters, succeeded in inducing the Emperor Maximilian I to issue an edict ordering the destruction of all Hebrew books. (1509.) All priests were directed to confiscate them wholesale and burn those in which passages were found derogatory to the Christian religion.

Thereupon the noble-hearted Reuchlin assumed the defence of the proscribed works, and in an address which he presented to the highest dignitaries of the church, he demonstrated the falseness of the charges brought against them. The Talmud, he pointed out, was merely a collection of ancient commentaries on the Biblical laws, and dealt with Hebrew theology, law and medicine besides; that to burn it served no purpose, since peaceful persuasion only, not brute force had power to alter the minds of men; that, so far from being prevented, the study of the Cabala ought to be encouraged because of the close resemblance some of the ideas therein bore to the Christian dogmas.

Reuchlin's opinions raised a storm amongst the "obscure ones" as the Catholic zealots were called at that period. He was accused of attempting to disseminate "Judean heresy," and

was summoned to appear before the Inquisition in Cologne. What this war between the humanists and the "obscure ones" might have resulted in no one can tell, had not Luther just then begun his Protestant campaign which ended in a general denunciation of Catholicism throughout Germany.

Luther's attitude towards the Jews in his capacity of founder of the new Church, was uncertain and vacillating. At first he preached humanity towards them, and in a book he published in 1523 he bitterly attacked their enemies. "The fools which are our people," he wrote, "the Papists, the bishops, the monks, have used the Jews in such fashion that every good and true Christian ought forthwith to have turned Jew. Had I been a Jew and seen such ignorant imbeciles the rulers of our church, I had sooner become a hog than a Catholic. For the Catholics have borne themselves towards the Jews as though they were curs and not human beings. Yet they are our brethren, and brethren of our Lord. . . . Therefore Christian, not Papal, love should determine our conduct towards them; we owe them our friendship and opportunity to labor for their livelihood, as we for ours."

Later on, however, when Luther had risen to the peak of his power and assumed the same infallibility towards his Protestants as the Pope

had done towards the Catholics, a radical change came over his views concerning the Jews. He preached against them as anti-Christ and ordered their persecution everywhere; "to the glory of God and Christendom," he called for the destruction of their synagogues, for the seizure of their Talmud and their prayer-books, for the suppression of religious instruction by rabbis, for the restriction of their choice of occupation and the compulsory employment of able-bodied members of all their communities in public labor. (1543.) Shortly before his death, Luther enjoined his followers either to force baptism upon the Jews or to expel them from the country altogether. Thus the founder of the German Reformation revived many of the crude mediæval superstitions it had been his declared purpose to combat.

§ 46.

The Condition of the Jews in Germany and Austria.

The Reformation, while it undermined the prestige of the Catholic Church throughout the Protestant countries, did not destroy the universal enmity towards all non-Christians. In only one way did it affect the situation of the Jews—instead of being persecuted by the clergy as formerly, they were now persecuted by the

kings instead. The German emperors most often abandoned their "crown serfs" as the Jews were rated, to the mercy of the rulers of the various districts and cities in the empire. In the cities, the Jews' bitterest enemies were the merchants and skilled workers, who refused to tolerate economic competition on the part of "aliens." The city magistrates, and the trade-corporations of guilds, oppressed and humiliated the defenceless ghetto-dwellers, and now and then riots broke out as a result.

One day, the Christian artisans of Frankfort-on-Main, led by a baker named Fettmilch, surrounded the Jewish quarter and attacked the inhabitants. The Jews put up a desperate fight under the protecting ghetto walls, and some in the forefront of the attacking mob were killed. It was impossible, however, to withstand the overwhelming numbers of their enemies, and at length the ghetto was taken by storm. Led by Fettmilch, the crowd swarmed in, and sacked, plundered, destroyed and violated their way through, finally driving all the Jews out of the city. (1614.)

A similar outbreak occurred in Worms, where another populous Jewish community existed, and after a long struggle, the artisans of that city also forced the aliens to leave. (1615.) This time, the attempt was less successful, for the Emperor Matthias took the part of the

persecuted people. He ordered the punishment of the ringleaders of both riots; Fettmilch and his followers were beheaded, and imperial troops escorted the dispossessed Jews back to their ghettos in Frankfort and Worms.

In Austria, the eastern portion of the German Empire, where Catholicism remained the prevailing faith, the Jews were hardly better off. During the Thirty Years War between the rival Christian factions (1618-1648), they had suffered much in the way of depredations and violence at the hands of the foreign armies which overran Austria at that time.

The German Emperors, whose residence was in Vienna, the Austrian capital, allowed the Jews to live their in their own quarter. A still more numerous community existed in Prague, the chief city of Bohemia. The ruler of Germany during the War, granted the Jews few civil rights, but as a devout Catholic, he was diligent in his efforts to save their souls. In 1630 he issued an order commanding the Jews of Vienna and Prague to attend church every Saturday to hear the priests' sermons, and the unwilling congregations were strictly watched lest they slept or talked while the sermons were in progress.

Forty years later, in the reign of Leopold I, a terrible disaster befell the Jews of Vienna. Margarita, the Emperor's wife, was a Spaniard

and the most pious of Catholics. Her confessors found in her hatred of the Jews a useful tool, and they did all they could to keep this enmity aflame within her. On the birth of a still-born child, the Empress begged her husband to appease the wrath of God by performing a "good deed," and expel the Jews from Vienna and Lower Austria. Leopold obeyed this entreaty, which emanated as much from the Catholic priests as from Margarita, and issued his edict of expulsion in spite of some protest in the Imperial Council, where certain of the members voiced their disapproval of so inhuman an action.

In 1670, accordingly, the Jews were ordered to leave Vienna and the Duchy of Austria within a few months. In vain they besought the revocation of the emperor's decision; in vain they offered huge sums of money to be allowed to remain. Their own influential men and foreign envoys interceded for them alike in vain. Several thousand exiles left Lower Austria and Vienna within the time given them. The governor of Vienna bought the deserted ghetto from the emperor for the sum of one hundred thousand gulden, and called it Leopoldstadt in the emperor's honor. The synagogues were transformed into churches.

A small group of the Viennese exiles settled in Prussia which had arisen as Austria's rival

in the struggle of supremacy within the German Empire.

Frederick William, the Grand Elector of Brandenburg and Prussia, willingly admitted the Jews into his territories. They founded a new community in Berlin which in time grew to be the largest in all Germany. His son, Frederick I, King of Prussia, harbored a prejudice against the Jewish religion, however, and began to restrict the freedom of its adherents.

Then one Eisenmenger, a Protestant theologian, made a collection from a variety of sources of all the prosperous mediæval tales about the ways of the Jews, and published them in a great volume written in German and entitled "Judaism Exposed" (Entdecktes Judenthum). Before the book had even left the printers' presses, rumors of its contents spread alarmingly abroad. The Jews implored the Emperor Leopold to forbid its publication which would certainly rouse the fury of the credulous populace against them. The emperor granted their petition but later on King Frederick of Prussia gave permission for the book to be published in his own city of Konigsberg (1711).

The "Judaism Exposed" became the inexhaustible source to which all the enemies of Israel ever afterwards repaired for the false accusations and preposterous slanders they dis-

seminated to harm the Jews. They found in this work an endless store of distorted Talmudic or rabbinical quotations, and countless false reports that exposed the Jews in a repulsive or ridiculous light.

§ 47.

The Intellectual Life of the German Jews.

Segregated in their social life, the Jews held aloof from their German neighbors in their intellectual activities as well. In spite of the dawn of the new era, mediæval customs still survived unchallenged in the Jewish quarters of the kingdom.

Young men were being brought up from childhood with no mental training but that afforded by Talmudic learning, and the men of the middle classes devoted their leisure to the same study. As for the men and women of the lower orders, they gained what food their minds required from the reading of "morality tales" which began at that time to appear in the Jewish-German dialect.

In the XIVth century, Prague, the capital of Bohemia, became the intellectual center of Austro-German Jewry. A Jewish printing-press was established there, as also were several schools for advanced Talmudic study, called "yeshiboth," which had famous rabbis at their head.

One of these rabbis, Jacob Poliak (died about 1530), acquired a certain renown as the inventor of "pilpul," a curious system of trick answers to Talmudic questions. By this method, the question under consideration was made to appear infinitely more complex than it really was. The procedure was as follows: first the student would quote every contradictory opinion he could find throughout the Talmud bearing upon the matter in hand, then one by one he would refute and thus eliminate them.

It was a form of mental gymnastics which undoubtedly whetted the edge of the students' reasoning faculties, but it was death to clear and logical thinking. The "pilpul" was severely condemned by all the best rabbis.

The name of one of the rabbis of Prague, Yomtov-Lipman Heller, is closely associated with the history of the Austrian Jews during the Thirty Years' War. He was chairman of the commission appointed to take charge of the special tax of 40,000 gulden sent from the Jewish communities of Bohemia each year to Vienna towards the expenses of the war. Although the rabbi did his best to organize the payment of this heavy tax equitably amongst the various sections of his community, he could not do so to the satisfaction of all, and his administration was often reproached by those who considered themselves unjustly used. At last the enemies he

thus incurred sent a report to Vienna, complaining of irregularities in the administration, and mentioning for good measure, that in one of Heller's works, expressions were to be found disparaging the Christian religion. The result of the movement's most furious antagonists was Prague, and his removal to Vienna by order of the emperor. (1529.) There he was flung into prison with common criminals while the authorities considered the accusations against him. The crime of showing disrespect to the Church was punishable by death, and this would have been Heller's fate had not the Jewish community in Vienna interceded successfully in his behalf. The emperor set him free, but deprived him of the further right to occupy the position of rabbi, and fined him 10,000 gulden into the bargain. Thus bereft of his honorable standing and of all his fortune, Lipman Heller left Germany and emigrated to Poland where he became the rabbi of Cracow.

His most important works are a commentary on the Mishnah (Tosfoth Yomtov), which was used as a text-book in the Talmudic schools, and a highly interesting autobiography (Megilath Ayva), in which all his adventures are set forth.

One of the very rare representatives of secular learning in the "realm of rabbinism" which was German Jewry, was David Hans. (Died 1613.)

Living most of his life in Prague, Hans was an ardent student of mathematics, geography and history. The famous astronomers, Kepler and Tycho Brahe, were his friends. He compiled an historical chronicle in two parts, one devoted to Jewish history, the other general. "Zemach David," Prague (1592). In the course of this work, the author went to many sources outside Jewish chronicles. He also published two other works, one on astronomy and one on mathematical geography.

Germany also produced a famous Cabalist, Isaiah Horwitz (1630), the rabbi of Frankfort and Prague. The upheaval caused by the Thirty Years' War, led him to leave Europe and spend the remaining years of his life in Palestine. Devoted to pious deeds, he lived in Jerusalem and Safed, which latter town was the hotbed of the Cabalist movement whose adherents lived there like hermits. In Safed he completed his life-work begun in Europe, the "Shne Lucoth Habrith" (The Two Tables of the Covenant), better known under its abbreviated title of "Shelo." It is an enormous volume containing a collection of articles on the Cabala, on law, ethics, penitential rites, and rules of life for hermits according to the doctrines of Ari and Vital.

The Messianic Movement founded by Sabbathai Zevi, found followers amongst the Ger-

man Jews, who, in the midst of their hardships as subjects of oppressors, longed for the advent of the wonderful savior who would deliver them into freedom, but their hopes were doomed to bitter disappointment. Sabbathai's fraudulent claims were finally exposed, and the rabbis at once began to persecute all who were suspected of being members of any Sabbathian sect. One of the movement's most furious antagonist was a well-known Talmudist named Jacob Emden, whose home was in Altona, near Hamburg. (Died 1776.) He left no stone unturned in searching out the remotest hiding-places of the "Sabbathian heresy" and ruthlessly pursued all suspects, without respect of person, though some were the most esteemed members of the community. His writings heaped censure upon the heads of all heretics, dead or alive. Emden became the center of attention when he entered into a controversy with Jonathan Eibeschutz, a famous rabbi of Prague. (Died 1764.) Eibeschutz was an eloquent preacher and a learned Talmudist, but he had also studied the Cabala, and was rumored to be carrying on secret negotiations with the Sabbathians. He was in the habit of writing occult Cabalistic formulæ on pieces of parchment and giving these to the sick as talismans sure to cure them. When he became chief rabbi of Hamburg, he also became a near neighbor of Emden who began to watch

him closely. He obtained some of the alleged talismans, and declared that some of them contained references to Sabbathai Zevi, whereupon he publicly accused their author of a strong leaning towards, if not actual participation in, the Sabbathian heresy. (1751.) The open accusation of Eibeschutz caused great disturbance amongst the rabbis, who split into two parties, one siding with Emden and the other with the chief rabbi. The struggle was upheld by both factions, and the death of Eibeschutz found German Jewry definitely divided into two opposite camps, the Talmudists on the one side and the Cabalists on the other.

CHAPTER IX.

The Jews in Russia and Poland.
XVIth-XVIIth Century.

§ 48.

The Golden Age.

THE XVIth century was the golden age for the Jews in Poland and Lithuania.

Poland inherited the supremacy in Jewry that Spain had lost, for the horrors of mediæval Western Europe drove multitudes of Jews into the eastern country where they soon made their presence felt in its economic development. The highest stratum of Polish society was the class of landowning nobles, and the lowest the peasant class. The Jews, who represented the industrial and commercial activities of the kingdom, came between the two. Their only competitors in the cities were the Polish guilds and the German merchants.

The Polish kings of the XVIth century were all protectors of the Jews in their dominions. Sigismund I, brother and successor of Alexander (see § 34) ratified the rights his predeces-

sors had granted them. (1507.) His wealthy Jewish subjects rendered him valuable financial service, supervising the collection of state taxes and customs dues, lending him money for the prosecution of his wars, leasing or managing the royal estates which they developed with great efficiency and consequent profit to the king. In many ways they contrived to enrich the royal treasury. Michael Yosephovitch, chief tax-supervisor and collector of Lithuania, became very influential at court and was appointed elder or chief of all the Lithuanian Jews. This charter, granted by the king, carried with it extensive privileges, amongst others, permission to deal directly with the king on any important issue connected with Jewish affairs, the right to try and to pass sentence on Jews according to the law of Israel and use his own methods of collecting all government taxes. A rabbi, learned in the Jewish law, was appointed his assistant. With their racial integrity so securely safeguarded, the prosperity of the Jews grew apace; their communities flourished in Brest, Grodno, Troki, Pinsk and other cities of Lithuania.

The excellent circumstances of the Jews often aroused the envy of their enemies, espcially of the Catholic clergy, whose influence had suffered a great diminution with the spread of the religious reform from the West. The Protestant movement which went back to the Bible for its

foundation, inclined many Catholics towards Judaism, and a number of voluntary conversions followed. One Polish woman, Catherine Zaleshvska, accused of "Jewish tendencies" was burned at the stake by order of the local bishop; the execution taking place in the market-place of Cracow in 1539. The clergy accused the Jews of seeking these conversions, particularly in Lithuania, and discussed repressive measures against them. But the good King Sigismund saw that nothing came of their attempts to interfere with the people he had taken under his special protection.

His successor, Sigismund II August (1548-72), made a declaration upon his assuming the crown, to the effect that he would safeguard all the civil rights of his Jewish subjects. He extended the scope of their self-government, granting both rabbis and elders the right to try refractory or criminal members of their communities according to the Mosaic-Talmudic law, and even impose heavy penalties upon them. This was the nucleus of the system of autonomous communal life which, by uniting the members of each community, drew all the communities together with a sense of racial unity.

During Sigismund II's reign the Catholic clergy again attempted to revive the old persecutions of Jews. Rumors were set afloat, accus-

ing the purchase of holy communion bread from a Christian woman of Sokhachev, which the Jewish buyers stabbed until it flowed with blood. The supposed perpetrators of the crime were burned at the stake, but the king agrily denounced this conviction of innocent people on the strength of suspicion that had no foundation except in the superstitious ignorance of their accusers. When the clergy followed their execution of the alleged defilers of the host with reports accusing the Jews of killing Christian children as Passover sacrifices the king issued an edict ordering the instant suppression of all such outrageous statements unless corroborated by four Christian and three Jewish eye-witnesses. (1556.)

Sigismund's successor, Stephan Batory, also declared the above attacks upon the Jews to be base and groundless slander, used for the purpose of oppressing and robbing the Jews. He zealously protected the civil rights they had held under the former occupants of the throne, and added new privileges to those they already enjoyed. (1580.)

About that period the order of Jesuits was rising to immense power throughout Poland. This order of monks fought all non-Catholics with equal frenzy, using every conceivable means, fair or foul, to attain their ends. Their efforts at extermination were directed impar-

tially against Protestants, Greek Orthodox Catholics and Jews. Soon they had become the most potent educational force in Poland, almost all the tuition of Polish children falling into their hands, and when their pupils left the Jesuit schools, their minds had been filled with the most extraordinary superstitious beliefs and the deepest hatred towards all non-Roman Catholic mankind.

The Jesuit pupils grew up to occupy positions of importance in every walk of life, and their evil influence soon permeated the government. Sigismund III and Vladislav IV, kings of Poland during the first half of the XVIIth cetury, already relaxed their protection of the Jews. The city governors, or magistrates, and the artisan guilds restricted the rights of Jews in the direction of trades and commerce, and the usual ecclesiastical charges against them became more and more frequent. But they were still strong enough to fight against their enemies, for they were fortified in the possession of communal freedom and in the powerful sense of racial unity that bound them together, as also in the richness of their spiritual life.

§ 49.

The Kahals and the Waads.

The Jews of Poland formed a separate element in the population, governed by their own

elected representatives, spiritual and temporal. The community affairs were under the direction of the Kahals, or community councils, which existed in all cities where Jews lived, except in the very small towns or villages. In the case of Jewish communities too small to have a Kahal of their own, the one nearest to them directed their affairs. The members of the Kahals were elected once a year during Passover week, and were chosen by vote-casting and the drawing of lots. Each Kahal formed special groups within itself, each group attending to some special branch of administration. Three or four elders (Rosh), were the chiefs of the Kahal, and after them came the "members of eminence" (Tubim), judges (dayans), supervisors, and trustees of various institutions. The scope of the Kahal's activities was very wide. It included the collection and forwarding of the district tax to the royal exchequer, the apportionment of the taxes for the government and for their own communal uses, the supervision of synagogues, cemeteries and charitable institutions, the drawing up of deeds for transfer of real estate, supervising the education of the young, the settling of law-suits between members of the community, with the assistance of the "dayans" and the rabbi.

The rabbis ruled and judged the members of their communities according to the laws of

the Bible and Talmud, so far as those laws were applicable to practical life, but there were occasions when the local rabbinical court was in doubt whether to apply certain laws, or when the litigants, discontented with their decision, appealed to a higher court. It also happened now and then that one Kahal would enter into litigation against another, or some private citizen against a Kahal. In these cases rabbinical conventions were held every year to act as the higher tribunal where justice could be dealt out to all who sought it. At first this assembly was convened at the time of the great fairs to which multitudes came from far and wide; of these, the fair at Lubin was the principal. Ever since the time of Sigismund I, the rabbis had been accustomed to meet there for the trial of civil cases "according to their own law." Later on, these rabbinical and elders' conventions occurred more frequently, and as a result, a permanent institution called the "Waad" or Diet, was established. It was convoked annually and its members represented all the Jewish communities of Poland. It was called the "Diet of the Four Countries," because its members came from the four parts of the kingdom, from Great Poland, whose capital was Posen, from Cracow in Little Poland, from Lvoff in Podolia and from Ostrog in Volynia. The Waad not only tried appealed cases and established the inter-

pretation of laws, but issued new ordinances pertaining to public and religious affairs. Its activities were of particular importance during the XVIIth century.

Lithuania, which did not belong to the Polish crown lands, had its own Waad, consisting of rabbis and secular delegates from the five largest communities in the country, Brest, Grodno, Pinsk, Vilna and Slutzk.

The leaders of Jewry were ardent in their efforts to strengthen the nation's unity and preserve its characteristics. The education of children was the chief preoccupation of the Kahals and the Waads, and in every community the rabbi was regarded as the school-children's natural guardian. Very often he was at the same time "Rosh-yeshiba," i.e., head of the highest Talmudic school in his own city, and supervisor of the "Kheder" or elementary schools as well. In the larger communities, however, where the position of rabbi carried with it manifold public and ecclesiastical duties, the post of "Rosh-yeshiba" was filled by someone else, usually some celebrated Talmudist.

A contemporary chronicler draws a graphic picture of school-life in the Jewish communities of Poland and Lithuania in the first half of the XVIIth century. "In no other country," he writes, "ought knowledge of the holy teachings of Judaism to be so widespread as in the Polish

kingdom. For in every community there is a yeshiba whose head receives a liberal salary paid out of the public funds, in order that he might be relieved of material care and pursue his studies unharrassed. Young men studying in the yeshiba are also supported at the charge of the communities. Each student supervises not less than two boys whom he teaches in order that he may become proficient in instruction and in learned debate. Each student with his two pupils boards in the house of some prosperous member of the community, and is considered a member of the family. There is not one Jewish home without a scholar, sometimes in the person of the head of the family, or of the son, or son-in-law, or of a boarder-student at the yeshiba; and very often all of these could be found in the same household.

"The following curriculum is followed by Polish students: The school-year at the yeshiba is divided into two periods, summer and winter sessions. At the beginning of each, the Gemarah, or Babylonian Talmud is studied with great diligence, as also are the commentaries of Rashi and the Tossafists. All the scholars in the community, the young men and all others who desired to study, assemble daily in the school where the Rosh-yeshiba sits where he may be seen by everyone. The students and men of learning stand round him. He lectures on the Galacha,

commenting on, and supplementing it as he goes. When the lecture is over, scholastic debates are held, various contradictory passages out of the Talmud or its commentaries are compared, the contradictions eliminated by other quotations and contradictions in those quotations disclosed and eliminated so that the problem at last stands clearly forth, solved.

"The head of the yeshiba has a special servant who makes daily rounds of the elementary schools and sees that the children are attentive and diligent. Once a week, on Thursdays, the pupils of these kheders come to the house of the "gabay" or supervisor of their school, who gives them tests in what they have studied during the week. Wrong answers are punished with a flogging administered by a servant at the supervisor's order, and a reprimand before the other boys, so that the culprit may remember to do better next week. On Fridays, the boys have to pass examinations given by the Rosh-yeshiba himself, an ordeal which keeps enough fear in the children's hearts to ensure their studying industriously. . . . Men of learning are held in high esteem and are obeyed by all the people. This proves a powerful stimulus to learning; all who would be influential within their community strive towards scholarship, and thus the land is filled with knowledge."

§ 50.

The Growth of Rabbinism.

Thanks to the freedom of government within the Jewish communities and the increase of schools, Talmudic learning in Poland reached a degree of excellence that had never been equalled. By the end of the XVIth century, that country, which had been almost negligible in the spiritual world of Jewry, had become supreme. The first great scholars to arrive in Poland, came from the neighboring land of Bohemia, where the Talmudic "pilpul" invented by Jacob Poliak was much in vogue. (See § 47.) A pupil of Poliak's, Sholom Shakhna (died 1558), founded a Talmudic School or yeshiba in Lublin, from which most of the most eminent Polish rabbis graduated. One of these, a scholar of Cracow named Moses Isserlis (or Ramo, died 1572), was a contemporary of Joseph Karo, the Palestinian author of the "Schulchan-Aruch," and Isserlis did much to have this code adopted in Poland. Being a Sephardic Jew, Karo had made no mention in his book of any of the rituals and customs common to the Ashkenasim, or Polish and German Jews, so Isserlis included in his text of the "Schulachan-Auruch" a great many rules derived from popular customs in those regions, or from the experiences of the Ashkenasic rabbis. As Karo had

called his book the "Covered Table," Isserlis called his supplement the "Table-cloth" (Mappa). His edition of the code was adopted by the Polish, Lithuanian and Russian Jews as a text-book on religious law. He was the chief of the community in Cracow, the ancient Polish capital, and there a great number of disciples gathered about him, many of whom became in after years great and famous rabbis. Besides his supplement to the "Shulachan-Auruch" he wrote many other books on rabbinical law and theology.

One of Isserlis' contemporaries and friends was Solomon Luria (or Rashai, died 1573), a remarkable Talmudist who occupied the position of rabbi first in Ostrog and then in Lublin. Unlike his Cracovian friend, Luria attached but small importance to the "Shulchan-Auruch," regarding it as an elementary, popular work, not worth the attention of a serious scholar. Luria took up the study of the original source of all the law, the Talmud, and wrote profound commentaries on many of the treatises contained in that vast work. These he published under the title of "Solomon's Sea" (Yam Shel Shelomo). He had many pupils and disciples and was the founder of a school of rabbinical literature.

Both these learned men were often called upon to decide questions of rabbinical learning

and law, by correspondents all over Poland, and in Italy, Germany and Turkey as well. A collection of their answers and rulings was published in a book called "Questions and Answers" (Shaalothu Teshuboth).

The scholars of the succeeding generation followed in the footsteps of these two founders of Polish rabbinism. Some wrote commentaries on the Talmud, Rabbi Meir (or Maharam) of Lublin, Rabbi Samuel Edels (or Maharsho) or Ostrog; others wrote supplements and interpretations of the old codes of laws, Rabbis Mordecai Joffe of Posen, Joel Sirkis of Cracow, David Halevi of Lvoff, and many others.

Jewish learning flourished in Poland in the XVIIth century as it had done in Babylonia during the era of the Amoraim. A great many works of scholarship were printed in the Jewish printing shops of Cracow and Lublin. Talmudic and rabbinical studies held undisputed sway throughout the country; secular learning and philosophy were altogether neglected, and lovers of the occult confined their studies to the Cabala alone. The best-known work on the Cabala was written by Nathan Shapiro, a prominent Cabalist of Cracow; his book was called "Exposing the Depths" (Megale Amukoth) 1673.

The religious unrest stirred up by the Reformation, created within Polish society several

sects whose tendencies were opposed to the established church. Of these the one which most closely resembled Judaism in its dogmas was that of the Unitarians, who denied the Trinity and the divine origin of Christ, but recognized the religious and ethical creed of the Gospel. These heretics were disdainfully called "half-Jews" or "Judaists" by the Catholic clergy. Christian theologians of various denominations frequently engaged the rabbis in controversy, and as a result of this practice, a remarkable book appeared in 1593, written by Isaac of Troki, entitled "The Strengthening of the Faith" (Hizzuk Emuna). In the first part of this book the Jewish scholar defends Judaism against the attacks of Christian theologians, and in the second he assumes an attitude of aggression, criticising the dogmas of the church. He reveals a number of contradictions in the text of the Gospel, points out where the New Testament deviates from the Old, and shows where the church dogmas of later ages departed from the teachings of the New Testament itself. For a long time no one dared publish this work and it did not appear until a hundred years afterwards in a Latin translation made by a Christian writer. Its formidable title was the "Fiery Arrows of Satan," and the purpose of its publication was the exposition of the "Jewish fallacies." In after years, this book was used by

Voltaire and the French Encyclopædists of the XVIIIth century, wherewith to belabor the dogmas of the church.

§ 51.

Khmelnitzki and the Cossack Massacres.

In the middle of the XVIIth century the condition of the Polish Jews took a change for the worse, owing to the increasing bitterness of inter-racial, inter-religious and inter-class struggles in that kingdom. The Polish and Russian peoples had come into conflict, as also had the Catholic and Greek-Orthodox Churches, and the nobility and the peasants. The Shlakhta, or nobles of Poland, oppressed the Russian peasants on their estates, and the Catholics incited the kings against their Greek-Orthodox subjects in particular and all non-Catholics in general.

This state of affairs was especially bad in the eastern provinces of Poland, known as the Ukraine or Little Russia. The larger portion of the population was Russian and of the peasant class, employed by Polish "pani" or land-owning nobles. A smaller section was the military group of Cossacks, who in time of war, served the Polish government. Besides the Cossacks in the service of the king, there were others, who lived in freedom on the steppes north of the Snieper Falls. They were called

Zaporozhtsi. The Orthodox Cossacks and the peasants hated the Poles, their oppressors; they hated the Jews also for occupying the middle class between the nobles and themselves. As Jews often leased the estates belonging to nobles they acquired the same power over the peasants as the owners possessed, and the Russian peasant, whose dealings were more often with the Jewish supervisor than with the Polish prince who actually owned the land, came to look upon the former as the immediate cause of all his hardships and meditated revenge accordingly. The bitterness of the down-trodden was mingled with the hatred of another religion, and the long pent-up feelings of the ignorant Russian population against the Jews finally broke out in a terrible uprising of the Cossacks and peasantry in the last year of King Vladislav IV's reign.

The leader of the Ukrainian rebels was Bogdan Khmelnitzki, a Cossack chief from the city of Chigirin. He gathered together an immense horde of Cossacks and peasants of the Ukraine, made an alliance with the Zaporozhtzi and the Tartars of the Crimea, and at the head of that vast army moved towards Poland prepared to invade the kingdom. (1648.) The Polish troops sent out against them were defeated, and King Vladislav dying, the country was plunged into all the disorder consequent upon an interregnum. The rebellion spread over the whole of

the Ukraine and the adjacent provinces. Bands of Cossacks and Russian peasants, led by Khmelnitzki and his confederates, the ruthless Zaporozhtzi, overwhelmed all resistance and destroyed Poles and Jews with the utmost savagery. "The murders were accompanied by torturing of the most barbarous description," says a Russian historian. "The victims were skinned alive, sawed in halves, clubbed to death, roasted on live coals or scalded with boiling water. Even infants were not spared. The worst cruelties were reserved for the Jews. Utter extinction was to be their lot, and every trace of pity shown them was looked upon as deliberate treason. The scrolls of the Torah were snatched from the synagogues, and danced upon by Cossacks as they caroused with vodka. The Jews were then stood on the sacred manuscripts and prodded mercilessly with knives. Thousands of Jewish infants were thrown into wells or buried alive."

Particularly tragic was the fate of Jewish refugees who fled out of smaller towns and villages into the fortified cities in the hope of finding protection against their enemies. Khmelnitzki, learning that several thousand were in hiding within the fortification walls of Nemirov in Podolia, sent a troop of Cossacks to destroy them. Owing to the difficulty of taking the city by storm, the Cossacks resorted to cunning.

They approached Nemirov with Polish banners, and asked for the gates to be opened. The Jews, believing they were Polish troops come to rescue them, admitted the enemy and paid dearly for their mistake. (June 1648.) Joined by the Russian population, the invaders killed every Jew in the city.

Yehiel-Mikhel, the rabbi and Rosh-yeshiba of Nemirov, hid with his mother in the cemetery, where they were found by one of the rioters, a shoemaker. He began to club the rabbi, whose aged mother implored the murderer to kill her instead of her son. But the inhuman brute slew the rabbi first and her afterwards.

Young Jewish women were often spared, to be forcibly baptized and married by the Cossacks and peasants. One beautiful girl, carried off by a Cossack for this purpose, told him that she knew how to charm bullets so that they could strike her and rebound without doing her any harm. The ignorant Cossack, challenged to convince himself, shot the girl who fell, mortally wounded to the ground. But she died rejoicing at her deliverance from the enemy's hands.

Another woman, as the Cossack intending to marry her was dragging her towards the church, jumped off the bridge over which they were passing into the river beneath.

About 6,000 Jews perished in Nemirov, and all those who managed to escape fled to the

fortified city of Tulchin. There, however, a second bloody drama was enacted similar to the last. The invaders besieged the fortress where several hundred Poles and some two thousand Jews had taken shelter. The besieged swore not to betray one another, and vowed to defend their stronghold to the last man. The enemy was kept at bay by the bullets of Jews, shooting from the fortification walls; the siege continued without success for the Cossacks who, tiring at last of their wasted efforts, conceived a base and treacherous plan to enter the city. They sent a message to the Poles within the gates, saying: "Surrender the Jews to us; them we will punish, but we will leave you unmolested." The Polish nobles, forgetful of their oath, decided to sacrifice the Jews in order to ensure their own safety, and admitted the enemy into Tulchin.

The Jews were first disarmed, then robbed of all they possessed, after which they were offered the alternative of conversion or death. Not one of them would betray his religion, so fifteen hundred were put to the cruellest and most inhuman death. The perfidious Poles were ill-repaid for their treachery, for when the Cossacks had finished with the Jews, they proceeded to exterminate all the Roman Catholics among whom were many of the most prominent representatives of the nobility of Poland.

From Podolia the rioters penetrated into

Volhynia where the massacres continued through the summer and autumn of 1648. The Polish troops, led by the valiant Jeremiah Vishnevetzki succeeded in defeating them here and there, but were unable to suppress the rebellion. It was not until the accession of Jan-Casimir, brother of Vladislav IV, was elected king at Warsaw, that peace negotiations were definitely opened between the Polish government and the Cossacks. In 1649 peace was restored, the Cossacks having acquired certain rights and privileges within the Ukraine, amongst others the right to prohibit Jews from settling in Cossack lands.

Jan-Casimir allowed all forcibly baptized Jews to resume the profession of their own religion. The women fled from the Cossacks who had stolen them and returned to their own families. The Waad of the Four Countries assembled in Lublin in the winter of 1650 and passed measures for the restoration of order in the public affairs and in the domestic relations of the Jews. The anniversary of the massacre in Nemirov was proclaimed a day of fasting and prayer, in memory of the martyrs who perished there.

§ 51.

The Jews During the Muscovite-Swedish Invasion.

The Poles soon broke their treaty with the Cossacks and attempted to subdue them once more, whereupon the leader or hetman of the Cossacks, Bogdan Khmelnitzki, proposed to the Muscovite Tsar Alexis Mikhailovitch, the annexation of Cossack Ukraine to his dominions. In 1654, therefore, the inhabitants of Little Russia, as this territory was called, became the subjects of the Tsar. Immediately, Muscovite troops moved to the adjacent provinces of Lithuania and White Russia with the purpose of making war on Poland. The Jews of both countries suffered terribly during the war which lasted for two years (1654-56), and each surrender of a Polish city to the allied invaders meant a fresh massacre or wholesale expulsion of the persecuted Hebrews.

When the city of Mohilev-on-the-Dnieper surrendered to Alexis, he ordered all the Jews out of the city and turned their homes over to the officials of the city government and the Russian authorities. The Jews, however, lingered on in the city, hoping that the Poles might soon win it back again, but their optimism cost them dear. Towards the end of the summer

of 1655 Colonel Poklonski, the commander of the Russian garrison in Mohilev, heard that Polish troops were approaching the city. Fearing that the Jews might join the enemy, he made them all leave the city limits, and as they fled away with their wives and children, and whatever property they had been able to carry with them, Russian soldiers fell upon them and put them to death.

When Vilna, the Lithuanian capital, was surrendered to the Muscovite troops, the Jews suffered as before; most of them, however, managed to escape, but those who were left behind were either killed or expelled by order of the Tsar.

Then came the turn of the crown lands of Poland, when the Swedish invasion brought the country to the very brink of ruin. (1655-58.) The whole territory was transformed into a military camp. The Jewish communities had to stand successive onslaughts by Muscovite soldiers and Cossacks, by Swedes and finally, by the Polish troops, whose brutality knew no bounds. The awful ravages of plague were added to the horrors of war, and enormous numbers of Jews in Cracow, Posen, Lublin and Kalish perished either by the sword or by disease.

By 1658 the country had just begun to rebuild order out of the chaos wrought by the war.

Polish Jewry, contemplating the losses sustained during that terrible decade (1648-58), was appalled at the total which, according to the chroniclers, reached over half a million. About seven hundred communities lay devastated, and in Russian Ukraine they had disappeared altogether. In the Polish Ukraine only a tenth of the former Jewish population survived. The rest either met death at the hands of the Cossacks, or were taken prisoners by Tartars if they had not fled to Turkey or other countries in Western Europe. Jewish refugees were to be met in every part of Europe and Asia at that time, and everywhere they told pitiful tales of the calamities which had befallen their brethren and of the hundreds of martyrs, until their listeners shuddered with horror.

The contemporary chronicles and the mournful chants sung in the synagogues at that period, reflected the torture of the Jewish people under the unspeakable disasters through which they were living. Nathan Hanover, an eye-witness of the Ukrainian massacre, describes it in his masterly history, the Yeven Metzula (1653). The rabbis sent new prayers to the synagogues to be read in memory of the new martyrs, and the anguish of the people poured forth in desperate, heart-rending supplications to Heaven.

§ 53.

Poland's Decline.

After the Cossack wars, the kingdom of Poland began gradually to decline. Its return to power under the heroic Jan Sobieski (1674-96), who showed marked favor towards the Jews, was but a dying flash. During the reigns of the Saxon kings, August II and August III, the kingdom again lost ground, owing to their misrule and the over-taxing of the country's resources for the prosecution of their unsuccessful wars.

The treatment of the Jews went from bad to worse. The government pursued its sole aim of extracting money out of them to their last penny by means of taxation; the municipal governments and artisans' guilds restricted them in the matter of free choice of trades and commercial activity; the nobles, as members of the Diet restricted their civil rights; the Jesuits in the schools filled the hearts of young Polish children with contempt for the alien race and religion in their midst.

Mobs of rough Polish school-boys would attack and beat defenceless Jews in the streets, and sometimes even force their way into the Jewish quarters where they started riots. This occurred in Posen, Lvoff, Vilna and other cities. In order to protect their members against these

"school-boy raids," the Jewish communities in the larger cities paid an annual tribute to the heads of the Catholic schools in return for their restraining the excesses of their pupils.

Humiliated on every side, the Jew found sanctuary only within his community, within the Kahal. The strength of this council was strengthened by the Polish government which refused to have any dealings with individual Jews but only with the Kahal which collected each man's taxes and paid the whole sum into the state exchequer. The Kahal stood responsible to the government for every misdeed of which any Jew was guilty, and owing to all these circumstances, the council's power in the community became almost boundless. It served a very valuable purpose in uniting all the Jews and protecting their interests, but on the other hand many Kahals abused the power vested in them. In certain cases their tax-administration was exceedingly unjust, and sometimes they were known to wrong the poor to please the rich and to interfere with the personal liberty of members of the community.

The calamities they endured left an indelible mark on the spiritual life of the Polish Jews. In the Ukraine' in Podolia and Volhynia, where the Cossack rebellion had taken its cruelest toll, the intellectual level of the people sank lower and lower. Talmudic learning in

which hitherto all classes had participated, became the occupation of a small group of "bookmen," while ignorance and superstition filled the minds of the poverty-stricken masses. In Lithuania and the Polish crown-lands, rabbinical science did not lose its hold so soon upon the people at large, though even there a perceptible slackening of intellectual activity immediately set in. The single hopeful exception to this universal decline was the appearance of a book of history written by the rabbi of Minsk, Jehiel Halperin. This work, entitled "The Order of Generations" (Seder Hadoroth, 1700), falls into three parts. Tracing the events of Jewish history from Bibilical times to 1696, it opens with an enumeration in alphabetical order of the names of all the tanaim and amoraim (Part I), together with their sayings or rulings as contained in the Talmud (Part II), and concludes with a list of post-Talmudic writers and their works.

As interest in rabbinical learning grew weaker, preoccupation with the "secret learning" or Cabala increased. The teachings of the Palestinian Cabalists, Ari and Vital, found many disciples in Polish Jewry, while more and more books were published dealing with life beyond the grave, with angels and demons, heaven and hell. Miracle-workers followed, claiming the power to cure diseases of mind and body by

means of mysterious incantations and talismans. A contemporary writer says "In no other land can the Jews so concern themselves with Cabalist nonsense, devils, talismans and spirit-invoking as in Poland."

§ 54.

Sabbatians and Frankists.

Sabbati Zevi's Messianic movement followed upon the horrors of the Cossack massacres in Poland. In the midst of their suffering the Polish Jews heard with fierce hope the rumors from Turkey, telling of the exploits of the pretended Messiah. In many places they even made all their preparations for immediate departure to the Promised Land. Nor did the popular enthusiasm for the movement diminish when the false savior renounced his faith, causing all pious men, rabbis and laymen to shrink from him in horror. Groups of "secret Sabbatians" were formed in Podolia and Volhynia; they were called "followers of Shabsi-Zevi" or more shortly, "the Snabses." Many of the traditional religious rituals were ignored by them, and they turned the Ninth of Ab from a fast-day into one of feasting in honor of the so-called Messiah's birthday. Certain branches of the sect gave up their lives to fasting and doing penance, others passed their nights and lays in merrymaking and depraved practises. So

rapidly did this dangerous heresy threaten to spread, that the frightened rabbis resorted to drastic measures for its suppression. In the summer of 1792, accordingly, the rabbinical synod at Lvov called down the "herem" or "pronouncement of excommunication" upon all secret Sabbatians refusing, after a given time of grace, to recant their false doctrines. This move met with some success; a good many members of the sect made public confession of their sins and performed the necessary deeds of expiation. But the majority clung to their heresy, and in 1725 the rabbis had no choice but to use the "herem" against them.

Jacob Frank, the founder of another sect, was born and brought up amidst the secret Sabbatians, in Podolia (1726). Leib, his father, had been expelled from the Jewish community on account of his connection with the Shabses, and had gone to live in the neighboring country of Wallachia, then a Turkish province. Jacob's first occupation was as clerk in a shop, and later on he became an itinerant merchant, going into towns and villages with his wares. His route took him from time to time into the cities of Turkey and he often found himself in Salonika, the centre of Sabbatianism. There he came into contact with the leaders of the sect from whom he learnt all that was most desirable in their teachings. At last he conceived the idea

that much might be gained by returning to Poland, and appearing before the Sabbatians there as a prophet. In this course, Frank was actuated less by religious zeal than by personal ambition and an adventurous spirit.

He made his entry into Podolia in 1755, and joined the leaders of the local Shabses to whom he communicated the revelations which had been vouchsafed to him by the Messiah's successors in Salonika. Secret meetings were arranged at which strange rites were performed by the members. One day during a fair in the town of Lanzcorona, Frank and a large crowd of his followers gathered at an inn to hold the services of their religion. They sang hymns and stirred their pious enthusiasm up to the highest point by means of revelry and dancing, men and women together. The Sabbatians' scandalous conduct horrified the orthodox Jews attending the fair, and resulted in a report being carried to the local authorities that a Turkish subject was in the town, inflaming the emotions of the people in order to convert them to a new religion. The gay assembly was put under arrest. Frank, as a foreigner, was deported back to where he had come from and the rest were delivered over to the rabbis and officials of the Kahal. The rabbinical synod at Brody proclaimed a strict "herem" against all Frank's followers, ostracizing them from the Jewish com-

munity and making it the duty of every true son of Israel to hunt down every member of the dangerous sect until the heresy was stamped out.

The persecuted heretics of Podolia resorted to desperate measures against the rabbis. A delegation of their members appeared before the Catholic bishop, Dembovski, at Kamenetz-Podolsk and declared that their sect repudiated the Talmud and recognized only the Zohar, the holy book of the Cabala. Like the Christians, they believed in One God in three persons, of whom the Redeemer or Messiah was one. This declaration filled the bishop with hopes of converting the Sabbatians to Christianity. He took the "anti-Talmudists" (as the Frankists called themselves) under his special protection, and challenged the rabbis of Podolia to meet them in open debate in Kamenetz. This event took place in 1757, in the presence of Dembovski and other Catholic priests. The rabbis' attempted refutation of their opponents' arguments and exposure of the falsehoods they disseminated proved unsuccessful; the bishop ruled that the "anti-Talmudists" were right, and ordered the defeated rabbis to pay the Frankists a fine. In addition to this, he caused all copies of the Talmud owned by the Jews of Podolia to be seized and destroyed. Thousands of volumes were carried away to Kamenetz and burned in the pub-

lic square, amidst the jubilations of the sectarians, whose revenge upon their enemies was thereby made complete. It is impossible to say what the upshot of this affair would have been had not Bishop Dembovski died suddenly just then, depriving the Frankists of their only protector and leaving them exposed to the persecutions of the Kahal.

Matters were at this stage when Jacob Frank returned from Turkey. He soon realized the desperate plight into which his followers had fallen through having renounced their Judaism without becoming proper Christians, and advised them to pretend to be Christians, at least for the time being. "Just as Sabbatai Zevi and his people embraced Islam to mere outward appearance only," he argued, "so may his Polish followers feign acceptance of Christianity." In their hearts, however, they were to go on believing that Sabbatai Zevi or Jacob Frank, his representative on earth, and not Jesus, was the true Messiah.

Thus in 1759 the Frankists made known to the Catholic clergy their intention of joining the church. They were received with open arms. Solemn ceremonies of baptism were held in the churches of Lvof, and Polish nobles stood godfathers to the new converts, bestowing their own names upon them and thereby admitting them into the ranks of the aristocracy of the land.

Frank himself was baptized at Warsaw, and King August III himself was his godfather. The ceremony was attended by ministers, courtiers and members of the most illustrious society of the capital. He was given the baptismal name of Joseph.

But the Frankists could not keep up the appearance of conversion for very long. It was noticed by the Polish clergy that the new Catholics were secretly practising their old rites, and betrayals from various sources soon brought the whole scheme of deception to light. The Frankists were shown to have merely pretended to accept the church in order to save themselves from ruin, whereas they had in reality never ceased to regard Frank as their "Holy Lord" and the successor of Sabbatai Zevi. Frank was thereupon arrested and tried before an ecclesiastical tribunal, and his judges, the highest authorities of the Church, sentenced him to imprisonment in the fortress of Chenstokhov. This stronghold adjoined the local monastery and was connected with it, and it was thought that this circumstance would ensure his complete disappearance so far as his followers were concerned. The hopes of Franks' judges were however not realized, for though he remained in the prison for thirteen years (1760-73), his adherents contrived to keep in communication with him all the time. Some settled in Chens-

tokhov or its suburbs where they formed a close secret sect, and they looked upon their "Holy Lord" as enduring the same fate as had befallen the "suffering Messiah" Sabbatai, who had also been imprisoned in Abydos. Frank did his best to keep up his people's faith by speeches and messages. He would tell them that only through the "religion of Edom" could salvation be attained, by which religion he meant the extraordinary miscellany of Christian and Sabbatian ideas which formed his peculiar creed.

Frank was at last set free when Poland was first divided (1772), Chenstokhov being surrendered a little later to the Russian troops. Accompanied by a great number of his faithful followers, he left Poland and went into Moravia. There, and later on in Austria, he presented himself amidst the Jews as a Christian missionary, and in that role he even insinuated himself into the favor of the Viennese court. His success was shortlived however, for it was not long before someone exposed his past and he was forced to leave Austria immediately.

Establishing himself finally in Offenbach, Germany, Frank took the title of "Baron von Offenbach." With his daughter Eva, called the "Holy Lady," he became the leader of a secret group of his sect, and lived in great luxury on the money he received from his Polish and Moravian disciples. After his death in 1791 the

sect began to break up. Such of the members as remained in Poland gradually mixed with the native Catholics and in time became one with the rest of Polish society, losing their integrity altogether.

CHAPTER X

The Transition Period—1750-1795.

§ 55.

Moses Mendelsohn.

THE second half of the XVIIIth century was a period of transition for the Jews, during which the old order of their lives gave place to the new. A liberal movement towards the emancipation of people's minds from the bondage of inherited mediæval prejudice, was making great headway amongst the educated classes throughout Western Europe. A school of writers sprang up in France who demanded liberty of thought and of conscience for all, however widely the ideas of the individual might diverge from those accepted by the majority. (Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and the Encyclopedists.) These radical Frenchmen's views became very popular in Germany, and amongst their admirers was no less a personage than Frederick II, King of Prussia, himself, who was fond of declaring how free his subjects were to save their souls according to whatever creed they chose.

In practice, unfortunately, Frederick made no attempt to alleviate the sorry condition of his many thousand Jewish subjects, but kept them without civil rights and granted the privilege of residence in Prussia only to such wealthy merchants as could afford to pay the heavy taxes imposed upon them. A small Jewish community existed in Berlin, the Prussian capital, and a ban was placed upon all would-be immigrants of small means who desired to make their home in the capital. They contrived to make their way there secretly, nevertheless, and one poor youth who got in by stealth lived to become the glory of his own people and of the whole of Germany. This youth was Moses Mendelsohn.

He was born in Dessau in 1728, the son of a poor copyist of Biblical scrolls for the synagogue, named Mendel. Under his father he studied Hebrew and the Bible, and the local Rabbi, David Frankel was his tutor in the Talmud. The boy's chief delight was in studying, and when his teacher Frankel was invited to become the rabbi in Berlin, young Moses followed him thither, being then only fourteen years of age. In his Berlin attic, he suffered great privations, but pursued his studies no less diligently for that. The spirit of free thought within him was aroused by his acquaintance with the philosophy of Maimonides. Lack of nour-

ishment combined with excessive mental activity completely undermined the boy's constitution, and his wholly sedentary life at last caused curvature of the spine, so that he became a hunchback for life. But he was utterly indifferent to physical suffering; he had interest only for the concerns of the mind, and there he was insatiable. He desired to add philosophy and secular sciences to his store of knowledge, although these subjects were at that time thought superfluous for a Jewish youth, if not dangerous. He plunged into the study of mathematics, Latin and modern languages, and soon began to read French and German literature. It was not long before he obtained employment as tutor in the home of a wealthy Jewish manufacturer, from which position he was later on transferred to that of superintendent of his patron's office. His material situation thus well established, he was at leisure to devote all his spare time to the intellectual pursuits he so ardently enjoyed.

Mendelsohn's meeting with the great German poet, Lessing, in 1754, was the turning point in his career. Lessing, who in one of his earliest dramas, "The Jews," had condemned his countrymen's prejudice against the Hebrew race, encountered in Moses Mendelsohn one of that race's noblest representatives. The two young men were immediately drawn towards

each other by the similarity of their ambitions, and under the influence of their intimate friendship, both these thinkers found their minds expanding. They were kindred spirits. Lessing introduced Mendelsohn into the cultured circle of his Christian friends, thereby laying the foundation of his literary fame.

One day Mendelsohn gave Lessing the manuscript of his "Philosophical Discourses" for criticism, and Lessing had it published without the author's knowledge. The book was a popular success on account of the clarity of its thought and its beautiful style. The young philosopher added to his renown with his next work, "Phaedon," which was an attempt, in the form of discourses between the Greek Sage, Socrates, and Phaedon, his disciple, to prove the immortality of the soul. Men of education read it eagerly, and Mendelsohn found his praises on every tongue. He was acclaimed as one of the greatest writers in Germany. His acquaintance was sought by the most famous authors of the day, and his home became the rendezvous of the intellectual élite of the capital. There, all moot problems of philosophy and ethics which so profoundly occupied the minds of his generation, were debated with ardor, and Mendelsohn came to be called the Jewish Socrates.

From his place of eminence in German society, he was not unmindful of his own people's

welfare. If he devoted his earlier years to general philosophy, all his later life was dedicated to the task of strengthening and rehabilitating Judaism. The following incident led to his taking up thus passionately the fight for his religion:

Among Mendelsohn's friends was Lavater, the famous preacher, who greatly desired to convert the Jewish thinker to Christianity. In dedicating his book "On the Proofs of the Truth of Christianity" to Mendelsohn, he challenged him to refute his contentions, and if he failed, to turn Christian. This defiance aroused Mendelsohn's indignation, and in his reply, "The Message of Lavater," he probably declared himself a Jew once and for all time, saying that that religion alone he sincerely believed to be rational and divine. At the same time he expressed his contempt for the dishonesty of any man who would betray his religion or induce others to change theirs.

But Mendelsohn's main ambition was not the defence of Jews in the eyes of the outside world, so much as the restoration of their creed from within and he sought for a means whereby it could link up with the course of progress throughout Europe. Like Maimonides, he wanted to widen his people's intellectual horizon and reconcile the religious doctrines with the truths of secular philosophy. He realized that

the Talmudic training led its students astray from the true foundations on which their religion had been built and which were to be found in the Bible alone. The rabbis' distorted interpretations obscured the sense of the divine book, and therefore, like Luther before him, he began his people's re-education by translating the Bible for them. He turned the Pentateuch, or Torah, into German, keeping strictly to the spirit of the original, and later on, in collaboration with other scholars, he wrote the Biur, a model commentary in Hebrew upon the Pentateuch, based on the grammatical and logical sense of the Biblical text, unadulterated with any artificial sophistries in the manner of the other commentators.

Published in 1783, Mendelsohn's "Torah" was received with enthusiasm by all the progressive lovers of learning, and with indignation by the reactionary orthodox rabbis who regarded it as a piece of dangerous heresy. All the rabbis of Germany published heated protests against the "Berliners," as they called Mendelsohn and his friends, and declared the new edition of the Bible an impious and heretical work, ordering its instant destruction. But their persecution of the book only helped to make it successful, and the Berlin Bible became the fountain of knowledge for many a young Jewish seeker after truth. They studied it in secret

and found in it a means towards learning the rules of pure Biblical writing, and towards a real knowledge of Biblical poetry and history. Eager searchers after truth learnt the German language through Mendelsohn's version of the Bible, and procured thereby the key which unlocked for them the treasury of German literature and secular philosophy and science. A new edition of the Psalms and other Biblical books followed the translation of the Pentateuch, and the rest were turned into German later on by Mendelsohn's disciples.

In "Jerusalem," one of the great sage's last works, written in German, he tried to show how rational learning combined with the observance of moral and national laws, and not blind faith, was what Judaism really required of its adherents. This book was hailed by Kant as the beginning of a general religious reform. Lessing, in his drama, "Nathan the Wise," had used his friend Mendelsohn as the prototype of his noble hero.

Mendelsohn's life was short, but crowded with great achievements. He died in 1786, and many friends and admirers of his genius mourned his untimely end.

§ 56.

The School of Mendelsohn—the Struggle for Education.

Mendelsohn was of those writers and thinkers whose influence upon their generation is exercised as much by their charm of personality and greatness of character as by their written works. Mendelsohn, as leader of a group, was far more important than as an author; he had the gift of inspiring his friends and disciples, and of inflaming them with the desire to labor for the common good.

The task undertaken by the "Mendelsohn circle" was two-fold, being on the one hand the reform of Jewish school-systems and on the other, the regeneration of Hebrew literature. These aims were well on the way towards accomplishment before the leader's death. In 1778 his friend and colleague, David Friedlander, brought about the foundation of the first "free Jewish school" in Berlin, where general subjects, Hebrew grammar and the Bible were taught in German. This new school was intended to do away with the evils of the old "Kheder" system of education which was concerned exclusively with the narrow training afforded by Talmudic study.

Hand in hand with the education of the young in the new schools, went the re-educa-

tion of their elders through the study of literature. The incorrect rabbinical language in which scientific books had been written had to be revised, and the pure language of Biblical Hebrew reëstablished. To this end Mendelsohn's disciples founded the "Union of Lovers of Hebrew" in Berlin (1783), under whose auspices a journal called the "Collector" (Measeph) was published. This magazine contained lyrical and didactic poems in Hebrew, scientific articles, articles on Hebrew grammar and the literature of the Bible, and translations of the finest examples of French and German letters. It bore a great resemblance to the young-folks' magazines of our own day, and it was precisely to this fact that it owed its popular success. Eichel, Wessely, Friedlander and other disciples of Mendelsohn were the chief contributors.

One of Mendelsohn's most famous colleagues was Naphtali-Herz Wessely of Hamburg, a prolific writer who contributed much to Mendelsohn's commentary, the "Biur" (1726-1805). Before that, however, he had attracted some attention as the author of a remarkable monograph on the philology of the Bible, which work he had followed by others, chiefly articles and poems in "The Collector." Wessely wrote in the new Hebrew, unlike Mendelsohn who used German almost exclusively. His long poem, the

"Moseiad" (Shire Tiphereth) describes the career of Moses and the exodus from Egypt in powerful Biblical verse such as had not been seen in Hebrew poetry for many a long year. His greatest renown, however, he earned as the fighter of the reactionary rabbis who hindered by all the means at their disposal the new education in Austria.

The enlightened Joseph II, who reigned at that time over the Austrian Empire, made strenuous attempts to improve the condition of his Jewish subjects, and issued an edict ordering the establishment of elementary schools for Jewish children where general subjects and the German language were to be taught. This edict greatly alarmed the Jews of Austria, Bohemia and Polish Galicia, which country had lately been annexed to the Austrian Empire. The pious mass of the Jewish people, encouraged by their spiritual leaders, feared that these secular schools would lure the scholars away from the study of the religious law and the Talmud.

The "Lovers of Education" on their side, welcomed the emperor's edict as the beginning of a brighter era in the life of their people. Wessely wrote a panegyric in praise of the "Emperor and Liberator." When he learnt of the dissatisfaction of the rabbis over the very reforms which were filling his party with joy, he sent a message to the Jewish communities in

Austria, which he published in Berlin in 1782 under the title of "Words of Peace and Truth" (Dibre sholo mve-emmeth). In this message he implored all his fellow-Jews to accept the beneficent edict of Joseph II with the enthusiasm it deserved, and tried to make them see that even from the standpoint of religion, every Jew ought to be compelled to know the language of the empire in which he lived, and to receive a general education, without which it was impossible to understand either the contents of the Talmud or the spirit of Judaism in general, both demanding a certain knowledge of natural science, history and geography.

Wessely's message found no favor except in the community in Trieste where Italian Jews made up most of the members; everywhere else it raised a veritable storm of indignation in the conservative camps. Jezekiel Landau, the chief rabbi of Prague, one of the most ardent defenders of the old order, condemned the "heretics" in the synagogue, pouring out upon them the most passionate denunciations. The friends of education found themselves seriously at war; they were excommunicated from Jewry and publicly cursed in the synagogues. In the city of Lissa Wessely's message was burned in the presence of all the people. Thereupon he wrote a second message in which he defended himself against the charge of heresy, and made another

attempt to prove his contention that general education and religion were not incompatible. The effect of this latter message was that attacks upon Wessely personally ceased, but the struggle between the friends and foes of the new education was not to end for many years.

§ 57.

The Haidamaks and the Partition of Poland.

While Western Europe stood at the threshold of a new life, Poland was in the throes of the long-standing disorder which brought about its final ruin. During the reign of Stanislav August (1764), the last king, this ancient monarchy fell into a state of dependency on her powerful neighbors, more especially upon Russia. Chaos increased as the conflicts raged more bitterly between class and class and religion and religion. The rights hitherto enjoyed by the Jews and "dissenters," which classification included all non-Roman Catholic Christians, were withdrawn one after the other.

Nowhere were the Jews in a more lamentable condition than in Podolia, Volhynia and the districts of the Ukraine which had remained under the sway of Poland. As in the past, the unhappy people in those parts, found themselves once more crushed between the two millstones of the harsh and despotic Polish nobles

above and the enslaved Russian peasants below them. Once more, as in the days of Khmelnitzki, unrest was seething amongst the peasants, and during the first half of the XVIIIth century run-away serfs were again joining the Cossacks of the Russian Ukraine and the Zaporozhtsi (Cossacks from beyond the Dnieper), forming themselves into bands of "Haidamaks," fearless bandits roving from place to place on their nefarious business. They raided and laid waste the estates of the Polish noblemen as well as small Jewish towns. At first the raids occurred but spasmodically and not very often, but as time went on they became more and more frequent and organized, until they assumed the terrible importance of a great popular uprising. The storm broke in 1768.

Poland and Russia had come into conflict over the Greek-Catholic population in Poland. Russia demanded that this section of the people should enjoy equal rights with the Roman Catholics, but the Roman clergy threw all their weight into the balance against this plan of emancipation. On its side, the Greek Church made an attempt to incite a rebellion in the Russian Ukraine. A forged edict, purporting to have come from the Empress Catherine II of Russia, ordered the annihilation of Poles and Jews throughout that part of the country, whereupon a new Haidamak movement sprang

into life, led by a Zaporozhian Cossack and Zhelezniak.

Bands of the rioters ranged over the province, within the boundaries of what is now the Government of Kieff. Jews and Polish nobles perished at their hands, as they overran small towns and great estates at will. Often the Haidamaks would hang a Pole, a Jew and a dead dog to the same tree with the inscription "A Lakh (Pole), a Zhyd (Jew) and a dog—they are all of one faith." After having massacred and robbed the Jews thus in several towns, Zhelezniak led his bandits upon the city of Uman, whither more than ten thousand Poles and Jews had fled for refuge at the first rumors of the uprising. When the Polish governor of Uman received the news of the Haidamaks' approach, he sent his Cossack troops to meet them. But the governor's army was led by Gonta, himself a Greek-Catholic Cossack, and he betrayed the Poles and joined Zhelezniak instead of stopping his progress towards the city. On the 18th of June, 1768, the allies marched on Uman, which at first put up a brave defence. Poles and Jews labored side by side on the city walls, pouring shot from guns and cannon upon the invaders, but they could not save themselves. The Haidamaks forced their way in, and instantly attacked the Jews who fled in panic before them through the streets. They met the most brutal deaths.

They were trampled under the hoofs of horses and thrown from the roofs of tall buildings; children were impaled on the points of bayonets and women were put to ruthless torture. About three thousand Jews had barricaded themselves inside a large synagogue, but the Haidamaks set a cannon against the door and blew it to fragments, after which they rushed inside and turned the sanctuary into a shambles.

Having disposed of the Jews, the blood-thirsty horde turned their attention to the Poles. They slew many in the church, and the governor and other dignitaries were not spared. The streets of Uman were strewn with corpses and with maimed men and women left for dead; in all some twenty thousand Poles and Jews together perished in the Uman massacre.

Meanwhile, in other districts of Kieff and Podolia, such as Fastov, Tulchin and elsewhere, smaller Haidamak bands, reinforced by the local peasantry, were exterminating the Polish nobles and the Jews. Once more Jewish blood flowed upon the ground where the hordes of Khmelnitzki had passed in by-gone years, and air resounded with the groans of martyrs. This time, however, the massacres did not last long. The Polish and Russian soldiery lost no time in suppressing the Haidamaks, and soon after the Uman invasion both Gonta and Zhelezniak were

captured. The former was surrendered with his band to the Polish government, and they all suffered hideous retribution for their treachery; the leader was skinned alive and then quartered.

Poland disintegrated very quickly and little by little was divided among the countries on its borders. Three times, beginning in 1772, the Polish dominions were redistributed among themselves by Russia, Austria and Prussia in council. The last partition of Poland occurred in 1795 when Russia received White Russia, Lithuania, Volhynia and Podolia; Austria, Galicia or Red Russia; and Prussia, Pomerania and the province of Posen. Within two decades, of the vast population of Polish Jews, the majority had become Russian, and the rest Austrian or Prussian subjects.

§ 58.

The Jews in Russia Under Peter I.

The Tsars of Old, or Muscovite, Russia, persisted in their stubborn refusal to admit Jews into their dominions. The Russians of that period did not like any foreigners at all, least of all the Jews who, as non-Christians, had introduced the heresy of the "Judaists" into their country many years before. Jewish merchants in Russia on business from Poland and Lithuania might stay there for a while, but were not allowed to settle permanently.

When Ivan the Terrible captured the city of Polotzk from the Poles, he gave orders to baptize all the Jews or drown them in the Dvina (1563). Tsar Alexis Mikailovitch banished them even from the Lithuanian and White-Russian cities which his troops were only temporarily occupying. (See § 52.) Nor were they allowed to settle in the Ukrainian provinces which the Russian kingdom had just annexed. It was not until the reign of Peter the Great and his successors that great masses of Jews began to penetrate into the Russian provinces on the Polish borders, more especially into Little Russia.

Peter would not have them molested, but during the reign of Catherine I an edict of expulsion was issued, and all the Jews who had settled in Little Russia were forced over the frontier back into Poland (1727). In spite of the interdictions, Jewish merchants still went into Russia on business, and in 1743 the Senate petitioned the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna to allow them back at least temporarily, on the grounds of their commercial value to the provinces in which they pursued their activities. The empress returned the petition with the following reply written across it: "From the enemies of Christ I desire no profit." It so happened, however, that vast numbers of Polish Jews became the subjects of Russia notwithstanding,

for the final partition of Poland brought many Polish provinces under the rule of the Russian empire.

The attitude adopted by the Empress Catherine II towards her new Jewish subjects hesitated between opposite extremes. On the score of their usefulness in the development of industry, she gave them the right to settle in New Russia, the recently annexed provinces, which were as yet very sparsely populated. Russia proper, or Great Russia, was still prohibited ground to them. The government promised them the same rights and privileges they had enjoyed before their provinces were annexed, but as a matter of fact, their situation grew steadily worse. In the cities their commercial rights were circumscribed and their taxes continually increased. In 1794 a new order imposed a tax upon Jews registered as members of the burgher and merchant class, twice as great as the corresponding tax paid by Christians. Only the Karaite Jews were exempted under a special charter which did not apply to the Rabbinists. For no reason but that they belonged to a particular race and adhered to a particular religion, the Jews found themselves impeded at every turn by the Muscovite government's legislation against them. They were not recognized as real citizens and their civil

rights were greatly restricted. Much the same state of things exists in Russia to this day.*

§ 59.

Israel Besht and Hassidism.

Parallel with the political transition period when the Polish Jews gradually became the subjects of Russia, a religious movement of far-reaching importance began to evolve, differing from both the old Rabbinism and the new "Berlin" system of education. The masses could no longer accept Rabbinism with its insistence on Talmudic learning and rigid observance of external rituals. Book-learning was not within the reach of the great majority, who exhausted all their energy in the struggle for their daily bread, and those whose piety was more than skin-deep found no satisfaction in the perfunctory performance of a multitude of mere ceremonies. Discontent of this nature had formerly gone to swell the ranks of Sabbatians and Frankists, but when these two sects renounced Judaism altogether a new doctrine came into being which touched the trouble nearer its source and was far better adapted to the long-felt religious needs of the period. This was the "doctrine of piety" or Hassidism, whose founder was a humble Jew of Podolia named Israel Besht.

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*Up to the Russian Revolution of 1917. (Translator's Note.)

Israel Besht was born in Podolia about 1700, into a very poor family. He lost his parents at a very early age and was cared for by charitable townsfolk who sent him to the Kheder to study the Talmud. But the monotonous routine of school irked the boy who was by nature a dreamer, and he would often play truant. Many a time he was found straying in the woods all by himself, absorbed in his own thoughts. At thirteen he became an assistant or "behelfer" in the Kheder, and later he was appointed sexton of the synagogue. It was at that period that his behavior took a strange turn; he slept, or pretended to, by day and at night when the synagogue was deserted he would pore over books or pass long hours in fervent prayer. The mysteries of the Cabala took hold of his mind, and he took to studying the "writings of Ari." He also began to acquire the art of performing "miracles" by means of Cabalistic incantations.

After his marriage, Israel settled in a village in the Carpathian mountains, which he afterwards left to live in the Galician city of Tlusta. It was there, according to the Hessidic legends, that he prepared himself for his future career. When he was thirty-six years of age, he announced himself publicly as a "Baal-shem," or miracle worker. There were a great many of these Cabalist conjurors at that time, all claim-

ing the power of curing diseases by incantations, magic formulas, amulets and medicinal herbs. Israel Baal-Shem employed these agencies like his colleagues, but at the same time, he tried to effect cures through prayer as well, which he offered up with much shouting and strange gesture. Whenever he was called upon to foretell the future, he would open the Zohar at random and make his prediction according to its dictates. Very soon he became known to all the people as a saint and miracle-worker, and they nicknamed him "the good Baal-Shem" (Baal-Shem Tov) or Besht, for short.

His reputation in this capacity thus established, Besht took up the teaching of religion. He travelled all over Podolia and Volhynia, healing and preaching. He made his home in Medzhibozh, a small Podolian town, and people came to him there from far and wide, to see him with their own eyes and listen to his sage discourses. Besht preached that true salvation lay in sincere devotion to God, in simple, unquestioning faith and ardent prayer, rather than in Talmudic learning. The essense of religion was "communion with God," and prayer was the means thereto. This, to be efficacious, should express the fervent ecstasy of the soul, divested, as it were, of its earthly shell. Artificial means, such as violent gesturing, shouting and swaying back and forth, might be resorted to in

order to attain the necessary state of exaltation. Besht opposed the chief demand of the Arian Cabalists by declaring that long fasting, mortification of the flesh and other practices of asceticism were both injurious and sinful, for God loved men of cheerful and joyous disposition rather than men made wretched by self-inflicted suffering. The inner feeling was what counted in religion, not the outward ceremonial, and he further condemned as harmful excessive observance of the minute details of ritual. The truly pious man, or Hassid, served his God not merely by conforming to the established rites of his faith, but by remembering Him at every moment of his daily life, in his work and in his thoughts. Constant communion with God through the spirit might bring a man the gifts of clairvoyance, of prophecy and of power to perform miracles. The righteous man, or Tzaddik, was one who has come, through the piety of his life, into closer touch with God than other men, and therefore his role in life was to act as intermediary between his fellow-men and the Lord. Only with the help of the Tzaddik could perfect purity of soul be attained and with it all earthly and heavenly blessings. The Tzaddik must be held as an object of universal reverence as the messenger and favorite of God.

No better doctrine than Hassidism could have been offered to meet the needs of the Jews of

Podolia, Galicia and Volhynia. On the one hand, it laid stress upon the principle of simple and implicit faith which all could understand, whereas the unattainable learning and scholarship of the older theology was beyond the minds of the great majority; and on the other hand it held out the opportunity of salvation through the miracle-working Tzaddik, always a highly attractive figure in the eyes of the average man.

Israel Besht as the Supreme Tzaddik became a popular idol, and rumors of the miracles accomplished and of the eloquent discourses delivered by this teacher of Medzhibozh brought even men of learning, rabbis and preachers, to visit him. He was said to have received divine revelations directly from the prophet Elijah.

Besht himself had the utmost belief in the high mission to which he had been called. About 1750 he sent to Palestine a message of prophecy wherein he described a marvellous vision that had come to him. His soul, he said, had been transported to heaven where he had beheld the Messiah and many souls of the dead. "Tell me, O Master," he had said to the Messiah, "when You will appear on earth?" And the Messiah had answered, "This is the token of my coming: when your teachings shall everywhere be known and when all men will have the power to perform those miracles which you now per-

form, then the time of great joy and salvation will have arrived."

Besht died in 1770 at Medzibozh, surrounded by his devoted disciples.

§ 60.

The Struggle Between the Rabbis and the Hassidim.

Besht's work was carried on by his disciples, chief amongst whom were Behr, a preacher of Mezherich, and Jacob-Joseph Cohen, though the former was held to be the great Tzaddik's direct successor. While he lived his town of Mezherich in Volhynia became the Mecca of Hassidism as Medzhibozh had been before. From all over Poland and even from Luthuania disciples came to the Master to be prepared for the mission of Tzaddiks. When Behr died, Jacob-Joseph Cohen, the preacher and rabbi of the cities of Nemirov and Polonny, rose to first eminence as a Hassidist. In his written works, Toldoth Yakob Yosef, etc., he set down for the first time, sayings of Besht's which he had direct from the lips of the founder of the movement (1780). These books formed the nucleus of an extensive Hassidic literature, to which many prominent Tzaddiks contributed as time went on.

By the end of the XVIIIth century Hassidism was spreading like wild-fire throughout Poland and Lithuania. In Podolia and Volhy-

nia whole communities went over to the new doctrine. The Hassidim had their own synagogues, where they conducted the services in their own peculiar manner, with shouts and violent gesticulation; they also slightly altered the order of the services and the contents of the prayers. In Lithuania and White Russia, however, the strongholds of the Talmudists, they met at first in secret, for fear of persecution.

The Tzaddiks, most of them disciples of Behr, were the leaders of the Hassidim. The most eminent were Elimelech of Lizno in Galicia, Boruch of Tulchyn, a grandson of Besht in Podolia, Levi-Itzhok of Berdichev in Volhynia and Zalman Shneersohn in Lithuania and White Russia. The Tzaddiks of Podolia and Galicia were miracle-workers as well as teachers of religion, and throngs of believers dogged their footsteps, imploring cures for their diseases, blessings, predictions of their future, and so forth. Many of the Tzaddiks profaned Besht's teachings by abusing the people's credulity and accepting money in payment for their advice and prophecies. Zalman-Shneersohn was the only one who refused to stoop to the role of bogus miracle-worker.

A native of Liozno, a town in the government of Mohilev, Zalman received his early education in the Talmudic schools. At the age of twenty he went to Mezherich and became con-

verted to Hassidism under Rabbi Behr, after which he returned home as a preacher of the new doctrine, though in another form, more rational than the one adopted by the Tzaddiks in the South. Zalman's teachings won him many followers in Lithuania and White Russia (1780-1800).

The rapid spread of Hassidism greatly alarmed the rabbis who still exercised great power in Lithuania. The chief of the Lithuanian rabbis at that period was Elijah of Vilna, to whom the ancient honorable title of Gaon had been given (1720-1797). He was a man of distinguished mind which a lifetime devoted to unravelling Talmudic intricacies had rendered extraordinarily sharp-witted. From his earliest childhood he had given proof of unusual talent. At the tender age of six he was already a student of the Talmud, and at eleven he was taking part in Talmudic debates of the most complicated kind, astounding the old rabbis by the extent of his knowledge. He quickly became master of every subject he undertook to learn. He was familiar with the Cabala, and incidentally picked up a scattered knowledge of mathematics, astronomy and physics, as much as he needed for the understanding of certain passages in the Talmud. His home was in Vilna where he lived the life of a hermit, absorbed by his books. He ate far too little, slept

only two hours a day, and very seldom spoke to strangers on ordinary subjects outside the range of his studies. At certain hours, however, he lectured on the Talmud before his pupils. The outstanding features of his life were his strict observance of the minutest details of religious rites and his ascetic mode of existence, in which there was no place except for study and pious practices.

It was inevitable that he should be deeply opposed to Hassidism which rejected the rigid observances he believed so essential, as well as his gloomy asceticism, and denied the importance of scholarship. Elijah the Gaon assumed the leadership of the rabbis, and declared war in their name upon the doctrine of Besht.

In Vilna and other cities all the members of the Hassidic sect were publicly cursed in the synagogues (1772-1781). The Hassid synagogues throughout Lithuania were closed and all the books dealing with the new doctrine were burnt. The Hassidim were declared apostates and were expelled from many communities. The zealous loyalists to the Rabbinist theology called themselves "Mithnagdim," i. e., opponents of the new teachings. Since most of the Kahal elders in Lithuania and White Russia belonged to the latter party, the Hassidim found themselves faced with persecution in their public, as well as in their religious, life. But

all efforts were powerless to impede the growth of the new order. In 1796 the Kahals, with Elijah's permission, set another anti-Hassidist campaign in operation.

The death of Elijah the Gaon occurred in 1797, and the persecuted Hassidim made no attempt to conceal their joy at the event, which fanned the fury of the Rabbinists against them into violent flame. Unable to contain their rage and hatred for the apostates any longer, the Mithnagdim resolved to denounce the leaders of the sect before the Russian government, declaring them to be preachers of a dangerous heresy. Zalman Shneersohn found himself arrested and taken to St. Petersburg where, after submitting to a cross-examination in the Secret Chancellery, he was thrown into prison. The appeals of his fellow-Hassidim, however, soon set him free (1798) though not for long. Two years later he was again arrested as a result of his enemy's denunciations, and this time he remained imprisoned until the accession of Alexander I, when he was finally restored to freedom. He returned to Liozno, his original home, but moved later to Ladi in the Mohilev government, where he conitnued his activities as leader of his many followers, the Habad Hassidim.*

*Zalman's teachings as set forth in his book "Tania," were founded upon three principles: wisdom, understanding and knowledge, or in Hebrew, "chochma, cyna, deah," which three words abbreviated, formed the "Habad."

The struggle between the two great parties in Lithuania and White Russia resulted in the founding of separate communities by the Hassidim, and for a great many years the members of the rival sects ceased even to intermarry. In Podolia and the Southwest, the Hassidim almost entirely supplanted the Mithnagdim, and the Tzaddiks acquired the same spiritual domination of the people as had once been the prerogative of the rabbis.

The one spot of common ground upon which the ideas of the two conflicting sects met was their common hostility towards the new liberal education then coming into vogue in German Jewry. So uncompromising was their attitude in this connection that Polish-Russian Jews, whose inclinations tended towards secular learning usually went abroad to get it, and Germany was the country they most often chose.

One of these emigrants was a Lithuanian Jew named Solomon Maimon (1753-1800). His father was a country lease-holder near Nezvizh in the government of Minsk, and like all the other children he knew, he was brought up on the Talmud. According to the custom of the time, his parents had him married at twelve, but he did not give up his studies. From the Talmud he passed to the Cabala and then to the religious philosophy of Maimonides. The boy's mind thirsted for new learning which was not

to be found where he lived, and so in 1777 he left his home and family and went to Germany to get himself educated in science. At first he lived in Königsberg and later in Berlin, suffering great privation and tasting all the bitterness of an exile's life in a foreign land. In Berlin he met Mendelsohn and was introduced into the great man's circle. He did not take long to become familiar with German literature and science, and he next undertook the study of philosophy, more especially the theories of Emanuel Kant.

The radical change from his Lithuanian seclusion to the life of an educated European, profoundly affected Maimon; he was beset by doubt, and his religious belief hung precariously in the balance. His works of scholarship written in German were confined to the analysis of abstruse philosophical problems, but in 1792 he published his "Autobiography," wherein he painted a vivid picture of the everyday life and customs of the Polish-Lithuanian Jews and told the sad story of his own career. He died alone in Silesia, in 1800. During the latter years of his life Maimon had become estranged from the Jewish people. His contribution towards their enlightenment was small, consisting of scarcely more than his single published work in Hebrew, an unfinished commentary on Maimonides' "Guide."

CHAPTER XI

A Survey of the Principal Events During The Nineteenth Century.

§ 61.

The French Revolution.

THE end of the XVIIIth century saw a vast upheaval in Europe which altered the political condition of several nations. With the great French Revolution, the principles of "Liberty, Fraternity and Equality" were enunciated for the first time, and men of all classes and religions were proclaimed equal. No exception was made in the case of the Jews, who, having reappeared in France during that century, found themselves on the same political footing as the rest of the people.*

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*Since their expulsion in 1394, the Jews made no attempt to reenter France until almost three hundred years later. Only Marranos, or "secret Jews," fugitives from Spain, lived in the French kingdom under the name of "Neo-Christians." At the end of the XVIIth century, however, a great many Jews from the German provinces of Alsace and Lorraine became the subjects of Louis XIV when he attached those territories to his own. More Jews entered France during the XVIIth century, some even living in Paris, but their condition as citizens was no less degrading than it had been in Germany.

The most eminent and active sponsors of the revolution, such as Mirabeau and his friends, demanded of the National Assembly that the Jews receive all civil rights enjoyed by Christians (1780), and in this they were enthusiastically supported by the delegates from the Jewish communities of Paris and other cities. Only the Catholic and Alsatian deputies opposed the proposal, but after many sessions spent in violent debate, the pro-Jewish parties won and King Louis XVIth set his seal to the Assembly's ruling (September 28, 1791). This was the first instance in European history of a Jewish emancipation, that is, of a sucessful movement to free them of their age-long civil and political disabilities.

The Christians were not to be easily reconciled, however. In Alsace, the home of quite a large Jewish population, hostility towards the enfranchised people showed no signs of abating for a long while.

The Emperor Napoleon I, who usurped the political power after the Revolution, could not decide upon a definite attitude to adopt. In 1806 he summoned Jewish delegates from all over France, Italy and Holland to appear before him. Abraham Furtado of Bordeaux, a wealthy Sephardic Jew, presided over the assembly. The delegates were called upon to answer twelve questions bearing on the compatibility of

Jewish religious law with French civil law. They replied that the Jews living in France regarded that country as their own, and held its laws equally sacred with the laws of their faith. This answer greatly pleased the emperor, who shortly afterwards, established a Sanhedrin in Paris, consisting of seventy-one members with the oldest rabbis in France at their head. The purpose this council was to evolve the best possible system of governing the French-Jewish communities. The Sanhedrin recommended the establishment of a head rabbinical consistory at Paris both necessary and expedient, with secondary consistories in the provinces. It was the function of these bodies to manage the affairs of their communities and see that the civil laws of the country were duly respected. They were accordingly established as the Sanhedrin advised and survive to the present day.

Napoleon's victories cleared the way for Jewish emancipation in other European countries. With the French domination of Italy the Jews there found themselves free, and in Holland the last restrictions against them were removed.

§ 62

The Progress of Enlightenment in Western Europe.

In Germany, the home of the new Jewish education, the improvement in the civil condi-

tion of the persecuted people did not long continue. In the territories forming the "Union of the Rhine," created by Napoleon, they had been given equal rights with the other citizens, and Prussia, while under the Emperor's heel, took similar steps to liberate them. In an edict issued in 1812, Frederick-William II, the king, declared the necessity of granting the Prussian Jews full civil rights. No sooner, however, had Germany shaken off Napoleon's yoke than this privilege, so graciously bestowed, was instantly revoked.

In 1815 the European monarchs formed the "Holy Alliance" for the purpose of putting a check on liberal ideas and re-establishing the old political conditions. Germany and Austria were the most ardent advocates of this reactionary movement which persisted for more than thirty years.

All activities on the Jews' behalf immediately ceased and the various German governments restricted their rights again as before. In several places there was even a recurrence of anti-Semitic outbreaks such as were common in the Middle Ages. Wurzburg, Bamberg and a few other cities witnessed anti-Jewish riots in 1819 and 1820.

This time the Jews felt their civil and political disabilities more keenly than ever before, for they had had time to grow used to German cul-

ture, and had but recently taken an active part in the wars to free Germany from the French conqueror. They regarded themselves as good citizens with all other Germans of the common Fatherland, when suddenly those same Germans turned round and began to treat them as aliens all over again. Not every Jew received the shock of this insult with the same bitterness and dismay. Many of the educated ones had already mingled with the Germans so completely that they had quite forgotten their own people. In Berlin and elsewhere many families became converted to Christianity, amongst them even Dorothea and Henrietta Mendelsohn, the philosopher Moses Mendelsohn's daughters. Men and women of culture, both Christian and Jewish, met in the salons of the capital, and marriages between Christian men and Jewesses were the common result, the wives adopting their husbands' religion. The greatest representatives of German literature of that period, Borne (died 1837) and Heine (died 1856), both renounced Judiasm in their youth, but in their latter years they made atonement for their apostasy by becoming their people's ardent champions.

Borne, a gifted publicist and apostle of freedom, held the faults of the German character up to the light, and none more ruthlessly than their barbarian prejudice against the Jews in their midst. Heine, greatest of German poets

after Goethe, expressed in some of his wonderful verse the sorrows of his race, and wrote a novel of Jewish life in the Middle Ages, "The Rabbi of Bacharach." Towards the end of his career he wrote his inspired lines on the Bible.

There were other Jews in public life who devoted all their energies to the service of their people. Gabriel Riesser, the editor of a magazine in German called "The Jew" (1830), was a tireless advocate of Jewish emancipation, and labored continuously to arouse his co-religionists' sense of self-respect while heaping censure on the apostates. "The son who is ashamed of his father is without honor," he would say, "and the generation ashamed of its past likewise." Other writers produced works on Jewish learning and history. The most prolific of these was Leopold Zunz, called the father of the new Jewish historiography. The period of his greatest activity was from 1825 to 1855. His remarkable researches in the field of the literature, religious poetry and sacred rites of the Middle Ages, had thrown much light on a particular phase of Jewish spiritual activity which until then had remained in obscurity. M. Yost, a fellow-student of Zunz, wrote the history of the Jewish people from antiquity to his own day, in a series of popular volumes. Both these writers used the German language.

In these historical works the educated reader

was able to follow the unfolding picture of the development of Judaism. Free-thinking writers expounded the theory that the innumerable rituals and laws prescribed by the Talmudists and rabbis of bygone ages were not applicable to modern Jewish life. They even pointed out that so heavy a burden as their observance entailed was a grave source of danger to the religion, for the modern educated Jew, unable to observe them all, tended to reject with the unimportant laws of a later date, the basic commandments of the Bible as well, until he had renounced his faith altogether. They demanded reforms made in the light of altered conditions. The leader of the reformists of 1840 was Abraham Geiger, rabbi of Breslau, a gifted historian of his race. His party, however, lacked unity; some devoted their attention to such external matters as the beautifying of synagogues and embellishing of the services, others began by rejecting the fundamental principles of the religion instead of merely changing rituals of minor importance. A party representing the Orthodox Jews duly appeared in declared opposition to the reformists. Rabbi Samson-Raphael Hirsch, a one-time fellow student of Geiger's, was at its head. "To adjust life to religion, not religion to life" was the motto of these "True Believers" as they called themselves. The two

factions met in a desperate struggle for the upper hand.

A notable expansion in the intellectual activity of the French, Italian and Austrian Jews was meanwhile taking place, though to a lesser degree than in Germany. The most prominent figures in Jewish learning in France during the first half of the XIXth century were Salvador, the author of important works on the Mosaic law, the history of Roman domination in Judea and the origin of Christianity, and Munck, the famous Orientalist whose books threw considerable light upon Hebrew-Arabic thought during the Middle Ages.

In Italy a great thinker, Samuel David Luzzato (1800-65), one of the teachers in the rabbinical seminary in Padua, rose to high eminence. The author of many historical and scientific works, Luzzato wrote of his conviction that Judaism embodied the most sublime philosophical truths and the most perfect system of morality ever devised. In his latter years he became convinced of the essential fallacy that underlay the new European culture, and considered the pure principles of Judaism the one solid bulwark against the encroachments of universal moral decay.

The spirit of free criticism and research penetrated even into the most obscure Austrian provinces which had once been Polish Galicia

and where Hassidism, hostile to every form of European enlightenment, reigned supreme. Yet even there a few men cropped up whom the new intellectual movement from Germany swept along on its tide. Nachman Krochmal of Brody (died 1850), wrote of the history of Judaism throughout the ages in the light of modern thought ("More Nebuche-hazman") and his pupil, Solomon Jehuda Rappoport of Prague, analyzed, after the manner of Zunz, many important epochs of Hebrew literature. In spite of his piety, Rappoport was persecuted by the Hassidists and rabbis, who considered the application of scientific method to the study of the ancient writings an act of sacrilege. These obscurantists were often made the butt of two Galician satirists' wit, Joseph Pearl lampooning them in his "Megalle Temirin" and Isaac Erter in his "Hazofe."

§ 63.

The Russian Jews Under Alexander I and Nicholas I.

The liberal tendencies rife throughout Western Europe at the beginning of the XIXth century, penetrated for a short time into Russia where the great mass of Jews had made their homes after the annexation of Poland. The Emperor Alexander I (1801-25), grandson of Catherine the Great, established a special committee to deal with the improvement of the

Jews' condition, and in 1804 he ratified the "Statute concerning the organization of the Jews" drafted by that committee. The first provision of the Statute was for educational reform; Jews were allowed to enroll in Russian schools and steps were taken to enable them all to learn the Russian language. They fell into four economic divisions, agriculturists, manufacturers and artisans, merchants, and burghers. Extensive privileges were granted to the members of the first group, particularly in regard to their exemption from certain taxes. Innkeeping and the sale of intoxicants, and leaseholding of peasants' lands, were strictly prohibited however, and in order that these restrictions might not be infringed, Jews were debarred from living in villages. As an inducement to them to become farmers, the government set aside vacant land on the steppes of New Russia for their use and offered special privileges to would-be settlers. Several hundred families from the Northwestern provinces responded to the call, and the first Jewish agricultural colonies were founded in Southern Russia in 1808. The experiment was a failure. On the one hand the Jews had never been accustomed to life on the land, and on the other, they found themselves faced with insurmountable difficulties in trying to tame the wilderness they had been sent to colonize. The settlements fell

into decay and were only recently re-organized.

The Russian government's solicitude for the welfare of the Jews did not last very long. The war with Napoleon (1812) and Russia's entrance into the "Holy Alliance" (1815), diverted Alexander's attention from the Jewish question, so that the second half of his reign saw the early liberal reforms superseded by very different measures. The establishment of the "Society of Israelite Christians" in 1817 was an abortive attempt to spread Christianity amongst them. They were expelled from villages to cities with great harshness, and the reforms provided for in the Statute of 1804 which aimed at their cultural and economic betterment were never carried out.

Under Nicholas I (1825-45) their condition grew considerably worse. The mediæval belief persisted in all government circles that the Jewish question could be solved in one way only, by compelling the Jews to adopt the religion and customs of the Russian people. The brutal legislation of the time was designed with that sole end in view. In 1827 a ukase was issued making military service compulsory for all Jews, under a conscription system of great severity. The protracted service lasting about 25 years in distant outposts of the empire, tore the young Jew away from his family and community, and accustomed him to a mode of life

utterly new and foreign to him. Time after time young Jewish boys, scarcely more than children, were drafted into military service, and usually sent to the far eastern governments where they were put into special battalions of "cantonist" minors. Under pressure from their superior officers, most of these Jewish "cantonists" went over to the Greek-Orthodox faith and never returned to their homes again.

Other cruel laws restricted the right of Jews to live where they preferred or to choose their trades and occupations. No Jew was allowed to take up permanent residence outside the former Polish provinces which formed the "Jewish pale."

It was not until the last ten years of Nicholas' reign that the government realized that merely restrictive measures could not meet the Jewish problem, and that it would be necessary to see that their educational status was raised before anything effective could be done. Following the advice of Uvarov, the minister of education, elementary schools were founded in 1840 where general subjects formed part of the curriculum, and two rabbinical schools in Vilna and Zhitomir respectively took care of the training of rabbis and teachers.

The majority of the Jews, whom the government's former cruelty had thoroughly frightened, met these new measures with deep distrust

and saw in the projected "school-conscription" yet another danger come to menace their race and their religion.

The peculiar civil situation of the Russian Jews created favorable conditions for their spiritual isolation from the rest of the population. Rabbinism and Hassidism were at one in preventing any new ideas from penetrating into the popular mind; though rival sects in every other respect, they were ever ready to join forces to combat the common foe of liberal education. The intellectual tendencies of the time contrived nevertheless to thrust out roots from Western Europe even as far as the distant eastern places where the Jews still went in darkness.

Isaac-Behr Levinsohn of Krementz (1786-1860) was amongst the most ardent advocates of liberal education for the Russian Jew, and in his books which were written in Hebrew, he pointed out that the study of the Bible and of the Hebrew language ought to be given preference over Talmudic learning. Neither, he said, was there any article of the Jewish religion that forbade the study of foreign tongues or of secular subjects. ("Theuda-b'Israel," 1828.) He also wrote scientific articles on the history of Biblical and Talmudic Judaism ("Beth-Jehuda" and "Zerubabel"), as well a work devoted to a refutation of the outrageous legends

accusing the Jews of using Christian blood for ritual purposes. With these and other efforts on behalf of his race, Levinsohn worked hard in the hope of bettering the condition of his unhappy fellow-Jews. Few of them appreciated his efforts, however; indeed he was commonly regarded by the Hassidim, who formed the greater part of the Hebrew populace, as an apostate and traitor to his religion.

The Rabbinists frowned similarly upon the "circle of the enlightened" (Maskilim), founded at Vilna about that time, with the chief object of restoring the use of pure Biblical Hebrew in literary composition. One of the members, Mordecai-Aaron Guinzburg (died 1846), labored with much success in the cause of prose style. His own works, consisting of books on travel, stories, historical sketches and an autobiography, marking a considerable advance on the style of his generation. ("Debir," "Abiezer," etc.) Abraham-Behr Lebenson ("Adam") of Vilna revived the Hebrew verse-forms in his "Songs in the Holy Language" ("Shire Sefat Kodesh," 1842.) For poetic gift and emotional quality, he was surpassed by Mikhel Lebenson, his son, whose death at the age of twenty-four (1852) brought a bright career to an untimely end. His "Songs of Zion" and "The Harp of Zion" ("Shire Beth Zion," "Kinor beth Zion") rank with the finest poetry in the Hebrew tongue.

§ 64.

The Jews of Western Europe During the Second Half of the XIXth Century.

In 1848 the political condition of the countries in Western Europe underwent a radical change. Revolutions in Germany, Austria and Italy resulted in a restriction of monarchical power and a great increase of popular influence in matters of government. The passing from a despotic to a constitutional regime meant a general movement towards political and social emancipation, and the Jews, whose leaders had largely helped to bring about the new order, found themselves once more in possession of rights as citizens. The vice-president of the Constitutional Assembly at Frankfort, where the new German constitution was being drawn up, was Gabriel Riesser, an old champion of Jewish freedom, and the council ruled that German subjects of whatever denomination were entitled to equal rights under the state. A similar decision was reached by the Prussian "National Assembly" then in session in Berlin. All over Germany equal rights for Jews were ensured by law, and opponents of the new regime who in 1850 were in the majority, found their attempts to restrict those rights sternly resisted by the members of more liberal society in which Jews were already playing an influential part.

The added strength gained by Prussia after the war with Austria (1866), together with the unification of Germany following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, lent further prestige to the German constitutional regime, and the position of the emancipated Jews, so closely bound up with it, grew accordingly more secure. Jews of talent were outstanding figures in all fields of political, social and literary activity.

The emancipation of their Austrian co-religionists proceeded along much the same lines. The consolidation of the Jews' position in that country was, however, a far more difficult task owing to the continual struggles for supremacy that were carried on within the empire by the various elements of its heterogeneous population. The liberal constitution granted in 1848 was frequently altered and abridged, but the constitution of 1867 ultimately made definite provision for the Jews' complete enfranchisement in Austria-Hungary.

They were still better off in France, after the revolution of February, 1848. In that country, which had been the first in all Europe to sponsor a movement to give freedom to the Jews, a Jew, Adolphe Cremieux, was twice Minister of Justice. (In 1848 and in 1870.)

Cremieux was an ardent champion of his people's cause. In 1860 he founded in Paris a society called the "Universal Jewish Alliance,"

with the two-fold object of protecting Jewish interests in all lands and of spreading European education in all their communities. It was only in the Mahometan countries of the East, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco and Tunis, that the Alliance was able to fulfill both of these purposes.

England granted the Jews equal political rights in the year 1858, adding this franchise to the civil rights that were theirs already. The newly emancipated people soon began to return their own representatives to the Parliament of Great Britain, and the honorary position of Lord Mayor of London was more than once occupied by a Jew. Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli), an outstanding figure in the history of that period and for many years Prime Minister of England, was a Jew and remained a sympathetic friend of his fellow-Jews all his life. The great Anglo-Jewish philanthropist, Moses Montefiore, labored indefatigably for the welfare of the Jewish people all the world over, and interested himself especially in their communities in Palestine.

By the end of the third quarter of the XIXth century, Jews had been granted equal rights in every European country under constitutional government. Italy (since 1848), Sweden and Denmark, and later on, Bulgaria (1878), Serbia and Roumania, however, stubbornly refuse to emancipate the Jews within their borders and

continue to regard them as aliens to whom unrestricted civil rights cannot be granted.

The work of Jewish historical research begun by Zunz and Yost, was carried on by other scholars during the second half of the XIXth century, more especially in Germany. The most eminent of these historians was Graetz, the author of an exhaustive "History of the Jews from Ancient to Modern Times," in eleven volumes (1854-1876). Many other men of learning devoted their talents to the study of the various epochs in the history of their race.

The civil emancipation of the Jews of Western Europe, while beneficial in many respects, was not without its less desirable consequences. The inevitable and natural intercourse between Jews and Christians who now had their social and political interests in common, very often resulted in a complete fusion of the two. This "assimilation" tendency made considerable headway in Germany and France, where certain of the Jews, calling themselves Germans or Frenchmen "of Mosaic faith," made a small matter of breaking the religious tie which, they said, inevitably weakened under the influence of new ideas and which alone bound them to their people. The younger generation drifted farther and farther from its Jewish sources and took an ever-declining interest in the concerns of their race, being gradually absorbed by the na-

tions in whose midst they had been born and raised. This state of estrangement might have assumed an alarming aspect had not the attitude of Christian Europe towards them suddenly changed, bringing them up short in their progress towards assimilation.

The last quarter of the XIXth century saw a new anti-Jewish movement in Europe. It went by the name of "anti-Semitism" and resolved itself into an attempt to revive the old Jew-baiting practices of the Middle Ages under a new disguise. The rapid progress the Jews, once emancipated, had made in all fields of social and industrial activity had aroused the jealous fear of those sections of Christian society which still clung to the idea of the social inferiority of the Hebrew people. It was declared that the Jew, being a Semite on account of his racial characteristics, was not fitted to tempt universal control, which in the domains live side by side with the Aryan Christian. His superior intellectual endowments led him to at- of industry and finance, of politics and jurisprudence, of journalism and science, he was already in a fair way to achieve, and the Christian was being forced out. The anti-Semites demanded the revocation of civil rights for Jews, and some even advocated such restrictions as would spell total ruin for the undesired peo-

ple and compel them to emigrate to other countries.

Anti-Semitism made its first appearance in Germany during the reign of William I when the empire was under the administration of the famous chancellor, Bismarck. One of the founders of the anti-Semitic party was a clergyman named Stocker, the royal chaplain in Berlin (1880). From 1880 to 1890 the party's influence increased greatly; its members sat in the Reichstag, it published its own newspapers and sent its agents far and wide to incite popular uprising against the Jews. After 1890 anti-Semitism went no further in Germany, but in Austria it was gathering momentum, as also in France in spite of the fact that that country had been the original home of Jewish freedom in the West of Europe. In Austria, with the various nationalities composing its population continually at odds, the Jews had enemies in the ranks of Germans, Czechs, Poles and others.

The French anti-Semites began operations by attacking Jews in the newspapers (Drumont), and continued their campaign in the Chamber of Deputies and in public affairs where Jews were concerned. In 1894 they brought a false charge against Captain Dreyfus, a wealthy Jew employed in the War Office. He was accused of selling military documents of great importance, dealing with certain plans of the French

government, to the representative of an enemy power. The crime was high treason. Though the charge was obviously without foundation, Dreyfus was nevertheless convicted and exiled to Devil's Island in South America. It was five years before the political parties who entered the struggle for and against the convicted officer, succeeded in making public the fatal error that had sent him into disgrace, and in having the unfortunate man brought home again.

The best and most representative Christians of all countries condemn the shameful activities of the anti-Semites and fight as best they can against their influence, but they are not able to exterminate this pernicious movement which has its roots in class antagonism and in the prejudices of the ignorant masses.

Anti-Semitism set the Jews of Western Europe thinking hard. The Hebrew populations at large, which once showed a powerful inclination towards fusion, are beginning to realize the necessity of uniting for the defence of their national integrity against the hostile forces lined up to attack them.

§ 65.

The Jews in Russia During the Second Half of the XIXth Century.

With the accession of Alexander II to the throne of Russia (1855), a more hopeful era

dawned for the Jews in his empire. This great ruler, called the "Liberator" on account of his putting an end to serfdom and his efforts to improve the state administration in all its branches, did not neglect the Jews in his reforms. Without making any radical change in their situation, the government saw the necessity of abolishing the most burdensome restrictions under which they had suffered at the hands of Alexander's predecessors.

The recruiting of Jewish "cantonists" was discontinued in 1856. Jewish merchants of the first guild, university graduates and artisans were allowed to settle in whatever part of the country they pleased (1859-65). Secular education had been somewhat encouraged, but the elementary schooling still remained in a state of almost complete neglect. In 1873 the two rabbinical schools and all the government schools established by Uvarov, were closed, and in their place, Teachers' Institutes and elementary schools of a new kind were established. Only a few cities of the Jewish Pale were given elementary schools, however, and the old system of education, the "kheder" and "yeshiba" continued predominant, while in all the other classes of Russian society, the young people flocked to the new institutions of learning. The radical change from "kheder" to "gymnasium" and from rabbinical learning to the secular

study at the universities, came to be quite a matter of course for the younger generation of Jews. Fathers and sons, as representatives of two conflicting generations, struggled together with bitterness for the upper hand, the elders holding the more fiercely aloof from the native Russians, the more strenuous their children's efforts grew to assimilate with them. As in Western Europe there were many cases of educated Russian Jews renouncing their allegiance to their own race and becoming one with their Christian compatriots.

The truly enlightened Jews who assumed the duty of working for their people's social and intellectual uplift, stood btween the orthodox majority at the one extreme and the "progressive" minority at the other. These "maskilim," or enlightened ones, revived literature in the pure Hebrew tongue, as one of the means of achieving their purposes. Abraham Mapu of Kovno (died 1866) delighted all who read his historical novels of Biblical times, "Ahavath Zion," and "Ashmath Shomron," and his portraits of contemporary Russian-Jewish life ("Ayit Tzabua,") written in the stately Hebrew of the ancient prophets. Leib Gordon, a gifted poet (died 1893), exploited every resource of Hebrew verse in his lyrical, satirical and epic poems. Both in his prose and in his poetry, Gordon exposed the intolerance and

conservatism of the rabbis and Tzaddiks without mercy. Peretz Smolensky (died 1885), who published in Vienna a Hebrew Magazine called "Ha'Shahar" (The Dawn), which was read chiefly by Russian Jews, was a tireless champion of the cause of liberal education for the Jewish people, and his novels and other works all reflected his views on this subject. The weeklies "Ha'Melitz," "Ha'Magid" and "Ha'Karmel," (The Interpreter, The Herald and Carmel), laid the foundations of Hebrew periodical literature (1855-1860).

Jewish literature in the Russian language first began in the sixties with such periodicals as "Zion," "The Dawn" and "The Day" published in Odessa, and "The Sunrise" and "The New Dawn" in St. Petersburg, all of which espoused the cause of civil liberty for the Jews. Joseph Rabinovitch Levanda and Bogrov, writing in Russian, wrote of the bright and dark sides of Russian Jewish life. This same Rabinovitch, together with a noted journalist named Orchansky, who died early in life (1875), ardently championed the emancipation ideal and never ceased to demonstrate the falsehood of the traditional anti-Jewish charges. Just when it seemed most likely that the bright hopes of all these writers were at the threshold of fulfillment, the sad events coincident with the out-

break of anti-Semitimism in the West occurred to prove how ill-founded and premature was their belief in the better time to come.

In 1881 and 1882 many cities of Southern Russia became the scene of anti-Jewish attacks. During these "pogroms," as they were called, Jewish homes were robbed and destroyed, property confiscated and now and then some of the Jews were killed. The attacks were particularly fierce in the places where the "Haidamaks" had raged in the XVIIth century, in Elizabethgrad, Kieff, Balta and other towns of the former Ukraine. Thanks to government intervention, the pogroms ceased in the second half of 1882, or reculled, if at all, only very casually in the districts of the Jewish Pale. The Jews' civil condition, however, took a decided turn for the worse.

During the reign of Alexander II (1881-94), laws were passed forbidding the Jews to live freely in towns or villages (Temporary Legislation of 1882) limiting the number of Jewish children in high schools and universities to a very small percentage (1887), expelling Jewish artisans and small merchants from Moscow (1891) and prohibiting Jews from being elected members of city councils, etc. (1892). Their economic situation being disastrously affected by these laws, the Jews began to leave Russia in great numbers. Most of the emigrants went

to America, some smaller groups to Palestine. In the last twenty years of the XIXth century nearly one million Russian Jews emigrated to North America and settled in the United States or in Canada. Agricultural colonies were founded by them in South America (Argentine) as well, upon the bounty of the famous millionaire-philanthropist Baron de Hirsch. The generosity of Baron Edmond Rothschild of Paris and of the "Palestine Society" of Odessa made similar colonies possible in the Holy Land.

In connection with the events of those last decades, the Russian Jews experienced a revival of their national spirit. This chiefly manifested itself in the rejection of the assimilation idea by a considerable number of the Jewish intellectuals, and their voluntary *rapprochement* with their own people. Many of them believed in the possibility of founding gradually an independent Jewish state in Palestine, and this idea was strongly upheld by the Palestine Society in the "eighties." It appeared in a new form under the name of Zionism in the "nineties" and spread all over Russia and Western Europe wherever Jews were living. Since 1897 the Zionist party which has acquired a vast number of adherents and whose great leader was Dr. Herzl of Vienna, has held periodical conventions in Basle and elsewhere. The party

hopes, with the aid of its "Colonial Bank" and its "National Fund," to develop agriculture and industry in Palestine, to encourage immigration on a large scale, and as a result, to create a great center of Jewry there, based upon the principles of freedom and self-government.

THE END